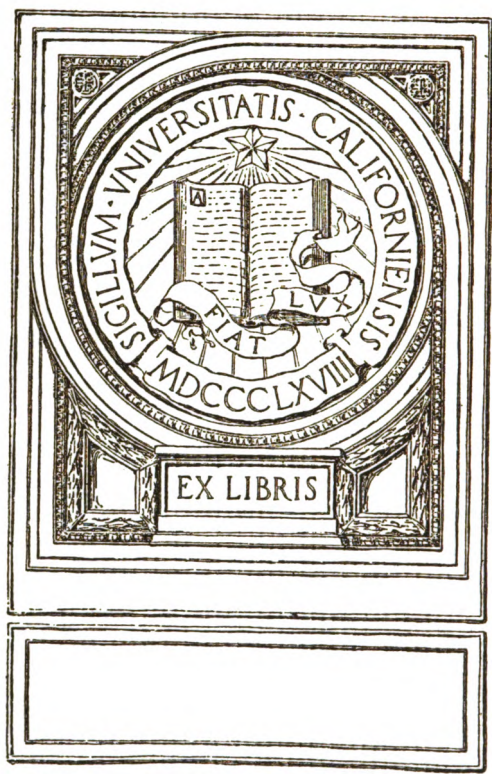

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**THE
BATTLE OF BRAINS**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE SECRET CORPS
THE COCKPIT OF PEACE
THE CRATER OF MARS

THE BATTLE OF BRAINS

BY
FERDINAND TUOHY



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**TO
THE PADRE
AND
HELEN**

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Dear Alan Bott,

It was principally the initial impetus given by you which set me on to these tales and I take this opportunity of thanking you doubly: for your interest in the first instance and for giving me permission to reprint in book form much that appeared serially in the "Graphic."

What was required, you may recall, was the first authentic sweep of "Intelligence" as a whole as it matured in famous years—so many imagine espionage as the be-all and end-all of the game—and it was deemed best that the attempt should be made via the short story reposing upon fact in all cases. But there arose difficulty over form. Where did fact end and fiction begin?

Two types of story were decided upon. One, a straightforward recital of elapsed events—such a narrative, as "Portrait of Mata Hari"—with names, places, dates, everything presented without interference by me. The second type developed into what I believe is called semi-fiction (and all Sir Garnet provided one doesn't take liberties!). Though no less true basically than type one, many characters and situations are summoned from the imagination, also, naturally, dialogue. Glancing through the proofs, "Two Birds, One Stone" affords a good

illustration of this second category. And incidentally this note of thanks is also killing two birds with one stone, since now that I come to think of it a foreword would otherwise have had to be written explanatory of the two types of story.

*Ever sincerely,
Ferdinand Tuohy.*

London, January, 1930.

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**THE
BATTLE OF BRAINS**

THE BATTLE OF BRAINS

THE CASE OF INTERPRETER VERMOLLEN

I SUPPOSE one would still call Camille Vermollen a bad egg even these long years after.

Yet there may have been extenuating circumstances to his case (at least, so it has always seemed to me).

Take the matter of his nationality. He wasn't, of race or heart, in sympathy with the particular Ally in whose army he had to fight. His father had become a naturalized citizen of that country, causing the son to be called up for service without regard to personal sentiments . . . and it so happened in Camille Vermollen's case that these sentiments were pretty clearly defined in favour of the land of his fathers, Flanders, where, moreover, he was proposing to settle and obtain citizenship when war supervened.

Again, the impartial critic will certainly not overlook the fact of Vermollen having possessed peculiar knowledge leading to his downfall—or perhaps it were better said, the fact that he obtained this fatal knowledge in the service of the Allies.

A third extenuating feature concerns the

debatable degree of culpability attaching to his act in view of what may well have been his initial intention.

Finally, there is the agonizing impasse Vermolen got himself into—though admittedly he was the sole author of this, in so far as a human being can be said to be the sole author of anything.

So much said, we may turn back to a certain day of late 'sixteen, somewhere in France.

It was a hopeless, rainy, blowy winter's day of the kind which sent one's resistance to events down to zero; and Camille Vermolen, as he sheltered in a copse during an afternoon trudge in the vicinity of rest billets, was just about sunk to that temperature, morally and mentally as well as physically. He related afterwards how the whole concentrated misery and abomination of the preceding eighteen months came up before him, out of the abject rain, rain, as he sheltered in that copse. Yet that was scarcely the worst. That which drove him most down into the depths was recollection of how he had lost a soft job—an interpretership with an Allied division in Flanders—through being absent without leave all night, once, in the company . . . well, in the company of a girl-behind-the-lines. That seems to have been young Vermolen's trouble—girls-behind-the-lines—that rude peasantry fated for a brief span to be so incongruously pursued.

"I knew Flemish as well as French. It was easy for me," explained this Don Juan of the Yser to the martial barrister judging that lapse.

Nevertheless, the punishment thought to fit the crime was severe. The accused interpreter, who had done such good liaison work between the troops and civilian population, was sent back to his horizon-blue unit in line; which implied a sentence of indefinite length, with Camille Vermolen, more intelligent, more sensitive than his fellows (and perhaps flabbier), going through unmitigated hell, rendered the more unbearable by the ex-interpreter's tendency to withdraw into himself and pine for that close association with his Flemish blood-brethren which his period up in Flanders had brought him. Later Vermolen drew a vivid enough picture of his composite misery of mind during 1916. "I also got shell-shocked and lost my nerve" he added, "but they always said I was malingering."

Well—there we about are, on that devastatingly depressing day in 'sixteen when a brooding soldier of the Allies sought shelter from December skies.

So wretched, indeed, so bowed down was Camille Vermolen, that he hardly noticed when after a while an officer drew up on a motor-cycle almost directly opposite, outside a billet. The solitary one just looked dully across at the weather-beaten contraption as it stood piled

against a tree bordering the route nationale.

Oddly enough, though, Vermolen found himself glancing across at the machine from time to time in the ensuing few minutes.

Somehow the thing seemed to be stirring some chord of memory—though just what, the ex-interpreter was blest if he could tell. Why should this rotten motor-cycle interest him? What . . .

Ah! Of course! Those divisional Intelligence warnings of old!

“Every case of a motor-cycle being left untended must be reported without fail.”

“Such abandoned machines constitute the easiest means of desertion.”

Quickening to memory's impulse, Camille Vermolen drew other phrases out of the past from those Intelligence warnings. “And are a constant temptation.” “Not only can the deserter get away immediately unchallenged, but he can later sell the machine and so get over the first critical days.” “Deserters on foot and by train are far more liable to apprehension.” Yes, that was true. Vermolen saw again those printed monthly lists of English executions, containing usually five or six names with particulars. “Was apprehended while attempting to board a train for a base port.” That was the usual.

Odd, that that thing should have been left opposite.

Rain, wind, rain.

Back to the line to-morrow night. The awful, accursed line of cratered mud-pools deep enough to drown. Bicycle.

BICYCLE. Trembling more from heart-thumps than cold, Vermolen darted glances left to right up the long, straight Napoleon road; then stared across again at the key of escape from it all.

Supposing. "Get somewhere . . . anywhere . . . join his own people!"

Not a soul in sight. A clear stretch for kilometres. Shaking more violently, Vermolen hesitated yet. But "things were too strong for me" (his own words later).

Half stumbling in his excitement over to the temporarily abandoned machine, Camille Vermolen threw himself across the saddle, kicked the starter, and shot away.

The fugitive motor-cyclist didn't reach his selected haven—a certain port filled with his own people—for many, many hours, and when he did, he was in sorry case as the result of capsizing into a ditch. A gash on the cheek and a twisted knee and a somewhat bent machine. But these were minor matters. The main thing was that he had arrived.

Now he was lying up, in a dingy back street off the docks; indeed, would be obliged to lie up for a week or two. Couldn't walk. How-

B

ever: money, he possessed. And with money one was safe enough in war-time among the lowest class of population. He had even obtained his funds—three hundred francs, a vast sum for a private soldier—from the surreptitious disposal of “his” motor-cycle through the agency of an evil-looking landlord who had retained half the selling price; while the scraggy old hag of a landlady who ministered to his rough invalid wants had obtained for him an outfit of docker’s clothes. Vermolen was certain, from their leers, that both knew his secret (how could they not?), but all he cared for just then were those francs and clothes. His uniform he suffocatingly demolished during a matter of days—or rather nights—in the worst form of French stove. Also, all his military equipment and belongings. But he still couldn’t get up. His knee wouldn’t support him. So he just lay low, planning, scheming what to do next.

Should he try to join his “own” army? (“But how can I account for myself?”)

Or should he, pretending to be a permanent casualty with his limp, try and sign on with a vessel sailing for South America? Or would his fluent Flemish allow him to pose as a Dutch colonist and enable him to ship Java-wards as an odd hand?

While he lay up, the conflict of what to do endured in the conscience of Camille Vermolen

who was certain that he had now been several days posted as a deserter before the enemy. Probably his description was already posted up outside. Probably the first thing he would see on going out would be his own face. The young man experienced a sinking feeling at the reflection. But did they do that with deserters? Heavens! Supposing he were now akin to a murderer!

Nevertheless, he had his docker's camouflage, and his limp should stand him in good stead, put them off the scent. His cheek, too. The gash had healed rapidly, but there would be a scar there for some time to come.

So fluctuated the reflections of Camille Vermolen as he lay abed towards Christmas-time of 1916—until, in fact, Christmas morn, when matters were brought abruptly to a head by the landlord appearing and announcing:

"I know what you are. But you must leave here at once, to-day, now, leg or no leg. The gendarmerie are making one of their house to house rounds. I have had some of your breed before. My advice to you is the same as it was to them. Put on those clothes and go and get a job, any job, down at the docks. Then, at the first opportunity, sign on or stow away in a neutral ship. There are lots of them. And they're short of hands. Afraid of the submarines."

In this manner was Deserter Vermolen rushed

off his feet, as it were, whatever may have been his intentions, good or bad.

"Are you certain it is he?"

"Yes, my officer."

The captain in charge of suspect work glared at the young woman standing timorously before his desk. A registered woman of the town and the lowest form of indicatress, one could go any length with her in the way of bullying.

"Why do you think it is he? Explain!"

"Because, my officer, before the war, in 1914, I lived with him three months. I was good then. I know him anywhere . . . and his scar and his lame leg. Why, of course, it is the dirty type you are looking for!"

At mention of the personal characteristics the captain shot a sharp glance across at his assistant, who whistled softly. But the former proceeded with his brow-beating, without comment:

"Why didn't you follow him?"

"I began to, but there were so many people in the main street that I lost him."

"But he couldn't have been going so very fast with his bad leg!"

"Perhaps he turned a corner, my officer. I . . ."

"Listen, woman Berteaux. To-morrow morning you will be here at seven o'clock—it was eight this morning that you saw him? Silence! And you will go with one of my

under-officers . . . well, to where you will go . . . and there you will watch, and when this man passes you will announce him. Go away!"

"Yes, my officer."

On the fourth morning of Camille Vermolen's makeshift job at the docks under an assumed name, and as he was limping to work, he was pounced upon and lugged, with thumpings and kicks, to gendarmerie headquarters. When he arrived there he was pretty well dazed. Still, he had sufficient wits left to appreciate that the game was up. Not the slightest use denying things. A firing squad at dawn. And of his own battalion!

Yet, to his intense surprise, that didn't appear to be the situation at all.

Almost as he crossed the threshold of the courtyard into which he was half thrown, an officer jabbed him in the ribs and shouted into his ear *in German*:

"And so, Hans Schmidt, we've got you, eh? Admit you're Hans Schmidt! At once!" (A blow full in the face).

For a moment of pain and mystification combined, Camille Vermolen swayed, scarcely reasoning. Then he had an inspiration of the kind that are apt to come to quick minds at such moments.

"Ya" he said; no more.

"To the cells!" roared the officer who had jabbed, and who now, for a change, spat in his prisoner's face.

That was the way to tackle suspects in war-time! Bellow and bash at them, take them clean off their guard! The rest could come later.

Camille Vermolen had a fair sprinkling of German, based on his Flemish. Since they believed him to be some German-speaking individual called Hans Schmidt, he could easily go on being Hans Schmidt—being anybody, for that matter, rather than who he was, a deserter with a firing squad in the offing.

So reasoned the prisoner for the balance of that first day of apprehension and long into the night.

One thing, though, kept cropping up with worrying insistence.

Who was this Hans Schmidt whose identity he had been literally pounded into assuming? What had he done?

The savage attitude of his gaolers, as if their charge were the foulest ever, was what first caused the prisoner serious misgivings.

The day following he was to know a little, though not much, towards an answer.

At four in the afternoon, and after having been kept without food or water for thirty hours ever since his arrest, the ex-interpreter of

the Yser was confronted with a tawdry, painted female he had never before beheld in his life, yet who proceeded to identify him, without the slightest hesitation and with the utmost conviction, as Hans Schmidt, her quondam lover of peace-time in this same port.

Being asked no questions, and being still entirely indisposed to reveal himself for what he was, the accused kept silent, merely gaping at the unknown young woman witness and then allowing himself to be thrust back into the cells.

But that night certain definite fears began to form; on his stiff plank bed the prisoner tossed wakenly through the dark hours.

Supposing this Hans Schmidt, who, from his name, must certainly be a German, were also a . . .

Camille Vermolen scarcely dared to breathe the word.

The smothered hunt for Hans Schmidt, "the man with the scar and limp," the German spy known to be on the trail of Tank information, had been as sharp and brief as it had been intense. The capture was indeed a great feather in local caps. So much so, that the captors were loath to part with their prize when a senior city intimated that the prisoner was to be forthwith conducted thither that he might be expertly examined on the workings of the German Secret

Service prior to his being sent to his just account.

With this movement order the trained officers on the spot were not at all in accord. They desired the kudos for extracting that important information themselves. Why, indeed, not? They were fully capable. They had secured the confession of identity. And the captive was already showing signs of caving in on the no-water régime. They'd get him to talk all right, never fear!

In this way a further day was taken up with intermittent telephonic wrangling between the two cities until, in the upshot, the local point was conceded. A brief general examination was sanctioned. But only one on general lines—nothing more.

Well, that would be enough, smiled the local experts to themselves; and prepared paper and pencils preparatory to pouncing upon their prey.

They were cheated.

Hardly had they recovered from the shock caused by their prisoner's appearance as he was led before them—forty-eight hours without water was stiff, but it didn't make a man look like a death's head, a wild-eyed human wreck trembling all over—than they gasped upon hearing this, stammered out in French:

"It isn't true! It isn't true! I'm not a Boche spy! I am Camille Vermolen, deserter from the

(regiment and location). *Examine, ask, and you will see I am telling the truth! Death—yes! But not as a Boche! Now give me water and send me away to be shot!"*

He was.

THE FOOL SPY

SALONIKA " 'neath the eyes of the gods " was in a pronounced state of excitement—which was saying a good deal of a place that had not ceased being a seething melting pot of the Allies and of the Levant for hard upon three years. All its characteristic traits as a " front " seemed suddenly to have come to a head simultaneously: its inter-allied jealousies, its malaria nerves, its drachma-grabbing, its viciousness, its refugee squalor, its din and dirt and dust and garishness, its disease, its lusting, its spying, its suspect mania, its maiden-tribute, its odours, its joy-riding, its wilting steam heat, its rumours, its surging jostle round the burnt-out centre of the city. *For something at last was really going to happen.* Instinctively the bastard vulture who was the Salonikan knew it. As for those in uniform, instinct was unnecessary: certain unmistakable orders had gone out.

Yet had that unholy mob but known it (and the soldiery no less) the " something that was going to happen " still hung fire. Although all preparations were being pressed forward, the Supreme War Council had not yet given its sanction. Salonika had been such a mournful

wastage, such an infernal nuisance politically, such a forcing ground of dissension, that the War directors were loath indeed to let any more generals try their hand. Intrigue and treachery had come to be synonymous with the place. Throw in fever and the fact of the Allies themselves spying one upon the other—and where were you? Hopeless!

Yet latterly, since the English had burst the Hindenburg Line and altered the face of the war, Versailles had been thinking twice—chiefly owing to the insistence of General Guillaumat who, himself returned from the Salonika Command, was willing to stake his reputation on the feasibility of a Vardar break-through if only they'd let his successor put the old Voivode Mishitch's strategic plan into operation. Now that the Sarraile school had moved on, all on the spot were at one that the old Serb's plan was sound.

Nevertheless Versailles still held off saying yes—even this second week of September, and when things were so patently cracking for Ludendorff in the West.

“You have fifty thousand less rifles than the enemy, who occupies all the high ground, with position after position dug in reserve. What on earth do you expect to do with raw, untrustworthy Greeks and fever-reduced, demoralized troops even if you do still possess one or two good Western divisions?” was what, in essence,

the Olympians of the Trianon Palace Hotel said to those beneath Olympus in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Then the magic day—September 11—when authority to go ahead at last came through! The Salonika Command needed no second telling.

Nor was it necessary to convene any special conferences for outlining the campaign. To such as were concerned, that was already known, having been expounded somewhat on these lines:

“We have 160,000 rifles against their 210,000. But they are nine-tenths Bulgar. In guns we have 1,600 against their 1,300, but they have it in heavies. We are on top in the air.

“The strategical plan is simple. Two French divisions will open by assaulting the Moglena mountain. Thinking it unassailable, the enemy is holding this lightly and defensive works are few. Through the breach Serbs will pour and while they press north to vital rail points in the enemy’s rear, the British will pin down the pick of the Bulgar troops to Lake Doiran. Final stage: the Allied wings will operate, the Italians from Monastir, the Greeks resuming on the British right. General objective Uskub, von Scholtz’ G.H.Q.

“But” those concerned had been advised, “a good deal will depend on the luck or the reverse which may attend certain measures we

propose taking, and which are not of a kind for mention."

The scene and time now change.

The time is one week previously. The scene is a Paris military bureau.

A general officer is skimming through a fat dossier marked "Devigne, Louis," and boldly in red ink in one corner "GRAND SUSPECT." After he has turned the last sheet he looks across at his staff officer.

"I think the fellow's a gift from the gods, Laplace. Have you read the dossier?"

"Not yet, my General."

"Well, you needn't bother. Briefly the case is this. The man's of French nationality, but was brought up in Syria and knows Greek fluently. He is thirty-five and married to a French woman. She was the cause of his turning traitor—threatened to leave the conjugal hearth unless he got more money. He was a confidential clerk at one of our Geneva bureaux and first suspicions were aroused when he began living beyond his salary. The usual test was set—he was allowed contact with doctored stuff—and it was established that he was passing on details of our secret service work to the Germans in a neighbouring street. He was conducted here a week ago and will assuredly be for Vincennes in a few months' time. *But*—he offers himself for any mission, even the most

hazardous, to escape the shame of the firing squad. The reason being that he is still abjectly devoted to his lady."

"And Salonika wants one?"

"Salonika wants one. Has been pestering for weeks."

"But I thought they'd sat on Franchet D'Esperey—that he wasn't going to be allowed to do anything?"

"That's not our affair. He *may* be allowed to do something. So our job is to get this man down to him as quickly as possible *in case*. Ring Colonel Pujo."

The Second Bureau, espionage section, was just along the corridor; almost directly the summoned officer stood before his chief.

"Ah, good morning, Pujo, sit down," the General motioned. "Your man looks as if he'll do. But what a business all the same! Too coldly calculating for my stomach. And this exporting of them to other fronts! Quite a new departure!"

"What will you, my General? The right ones are so rare. Besides, one must not forget that only with the very worst cases do we use them in this manner. The canaille even have one chance in a million of coming through alive."

"One chance in a million—yes, the odds are correct!" the senior officer nodded emphatically. "Well, what next, Pujo? How are you going

to send the miserable wretch down there? In chains?"

The subordinate smiled tactfully. "Not quite, my General. It is of course of consequence that he should not attract attention on the way or upon arrival at Salonika. I suggest, therefore, sending him down in uniform. With an escort, naturally. But not appearing to be such. He can take his civilian clothes along with him."

"An idea! Well, I see you've thought it all out, Colonel" (the General turned to other matters). "I'll leave it all to you. I . . . I am as Pilate!"

"Yes, my General. Except that there's no question of innocence."

That same day the traitor was conducted before Colonel Pujo; for matters pressed.

"You still volunteer for any mission, even the most perilous and hopeless, to try and retrieve your treachery . . . a little of it?" shot out that officer sternly.

"Absolutely, sir—anything."

For a moment the soldier studied the fellow. He was fumbling, looking away, terribly ashamed. Evidently not an out-and-out wrong 'un. Weak. *Cherchez la femme!*

"Well, one may be disposed to give you the chance—one chance. Even as you treacherously acted against your country and probably sent

two brave agents to their deaths, for they have not returned from Germany, so it may be possible now for you to help your country even if it should bring your own death. *As in all likelihood it will.*" The Colonel uttered these words with deliberately-spaced emphasis.

"Sir. If I can only take the dishonour from my wife I will gladly sacrifice my own life."

"Sincere" weighed the soldier, who resumed:

"That is already forfeit. And it would be better if you thought more about France and less about the person who has brought you where you are!"

"But it is stronger than I, sir!"

"Enough! You will be taken to the Army of the Orient. There you will be given certain instructions. Follow these implicitly, to the letter and in the face of all obstacles. We shall know if you follow them. Should you fail to do so—and you shall have the opportunity—your future will be written irrevocably. You will re-enter France to be executed on the present charge. Or you will never re-enter France at all! You will be obliged to stay out of your own country, an exile, away from your wife, until the day of your death!"

Louis Devigne blanched; but he nodded in understanding. "I am at your disposal, sir. One prayer, sir. May I see my wife before I . . ."

"Guard!"

But as the door closed Colonel Pujo threw aside the mask.

"A traitor, yes! But, of course, Nollet, see that he sees her. Poor devil." Then: "Enfin c'est la guerre!"

Louis Devigne gave no trouble on the journey down through France, Italy, across the Straits of Otranto and through Greece. The party of three poilus travelled by passenger express, the troop trains taking a week. Although his every movement was watched, night and day, Devigne began to feel himself as good as a free man again and looked forward almost zestfully to the work ahead which was to rehabilitate him (yes, he felt certain of that!). But to his companions he said nought—though, had he known it, they were carefully selected men of the Sûreté.

Nor did the first order upon arrival at Salonika come as a surprise when at headquarters he was discreetly shown a room and bidden don his civilian clothes and report at a certain villa. Yet if he subsequently walked forth to all appearances at liberty—his guard having been withdrawn—Devigne was fully aware that hidden eyes would watch his every step and act in Salonika.

At the villa—a treed-in affair in the residential end of the town—proceedings were cut and dried. An obvious officer in civilian clothes re-

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ceived his caller curtly, handed him an identity card made out in the style of "Alexander Ambiatros, contractor's agent, Athens," gave him the address of a billet and fifty drachmae, and ordered him to familiarize himself with Salonika during the ensuing few hours "so that you shall at least know what life is like on the front of the Orient should you have occasion to discuss it." He was to remember his new name and employment—he was collecting rebuilding orders now that the War seemed to be drawing to a close—and he was to report again the next morning at nine.

What a Salonika it was that second week of September, 1918! Alexander Ambiatros stared at it as he literally picked his way through the crazy, stifling potpourri. He had soon counted six different Allied uniforms. French, English, Greek, Albanian, Italian, Serb. And it seemed there had been Russians also. He followed the flow of officers into a tea place called Floca's and there listened to all six varieties discussing "shop" in their various tongues. "The English" he heard a French officer announce, "after rotting from fever all the summer, are now punctured by influenza. Impossible that they do anything serious in the offensive." A Greek officer he heard proudly proclaim that "our six divisions will bear the brunt. The English have nearly all gone to Palestine and

the French back to France!" To which another Ally seated at the same table corrected: "That's rather an exaggeration. Only twenty-four French and English battalions have gone to the Western Front. As for the English in Palestine—yes, two English divisions have gone colony-grabbing there."

Alexander Ambiatros thought it scarcely possible that such things could be openly discussed in this way. But the refrain went on, sometimes even heatedly.

"All trace of mutiny has now been obliterated with the French and Serbs, I tell you! It was contamination from those confounded Russians!"

Finally he overheard gruesome jokes being made about the probable fate of the Jugo-Slav Division, recruited from among Austrian prisoners-of-war, and any and all of whom, upon capture by the Germans or Bulgars, were to be executed out of hand as traitors.

Over all the talk planed the atmosphere, the "feel" of something big on the brink of happening. Alexander Ambiatros sipped his tea to make it last as long as possible; then, when Floca's began to thin out and he overheard dinner appointments being made for the Cercle Militaire and the Tour Blanche, he enquired what the latter place was, and on being told "*the* place of Salonika," made a mental note to dine there himself.

In a stationer's shop he bought a map with the object of looking up the towns he had heard mentioned and of getting the "hang" of the front generally. This he studied at a café on the main boulevard skirting the harbour; but very quickly the babble and crush and odour dissipated concentration. What a collection! Besides the uniforms, the newcomer beheld a ceaseless, jostling surge of unbelievably sinister-looking cross-breeds. Turks, Greeks, Macedonian refugees, gypsies, Jews jibbering Spanish, Balkan half-castes. More than one stopped at his table to offer cocaine, disgusting pictures, or the address of a brothel. One recited in three languages that he had a pretty virgin daughter, adding a figure in drachmae. Angrily, Louis Devigne swept the vermin aside and called for writing material for a letter to his adored Céleste. After which, he sauntered along the quayside watching transports and store ships that had out-zigzagged the U-boats come to their moorings. Decidedly, what a place for spies!

Later that evening he had his local education extended. In the Tour Blanche an apparent Greek civilian at an adjacent table made conversation and then invited himself over. So great was the blare of the band and the shouting from table to table of Allied officers—most of whom were swilling down champagne with shrill-voiced cocottes—that the two civilians could

hardly hear one another speak. But at one stage Alexander Ambiatros did manage to ask his unknown companion (who he more than suspected was shadowing him) why were there so many French girls?

Oh, that was easily explained. "Two years ago Sarraill tried to stop contact between Allied officers and Balkan prostitutes because information came through that von Schenck, the chief German agent in Athens, was smuggling girls over here for espionage purposes—principally Roumanians—nearly all of whom talk French. To defeat this, Sarraill imported fifty registered Frenchwomen from Marseilles. They're still here—all around us."

. . . And so the night devolved, while the interior of the Tour Blanche grew wilder and wilder and a constant stream of officers drove up and an equally constant stream drove off, accompanied.

Next morning Alexander Ambiatros was at the villa before time. It was the afore-mentioned red-letter day, September 11th, and as he waited in an ante-room, his ear might well have itched.

At a highly secret Allied conference of three only, the head of the villa organization was saying:

" . . . Finally we've got a traitor on hand and the proposal is to use him as a fool-spy as follows. We want at all costs to deflect enemy

attention from our principal agents watching the rail sectors Veles-Gradoko and Uskub-Veles for enemy reinforcements and preparing to blow up the line coincident with our offensive on the fifteenth. This traitor is therefore being sent over the line to connect up with three notorious double-crossers who have time and again given us wrong information and who are unquestionably informers for the Germans. He is to give these informers instructions to watch the vital rail sectors as from the *twentieth*, also two of them are to be instructed and well paid to blow up certain parts of the line on and subsequent to that date. Of course they'll go straight to the Germans. We hope in this manner to lull von Scholtz into believing we're not going to attack until the twentieth, by which time—in fact five days earlier—we should have broken clean through.”

“The fellow will naturally be at once denounced, caught, and shot?” asked one present.

“But that certainly. For him it will be merely another version of the firing squad.”

“Rotten shame, I call it.”

“Gentlemen—what will you? A traitor. War.”

Communication of what was expected of him did not come as a surprise to Alexander Ambiatros, who had all along suspected something of the sort.

"You are playing for the highest stakes, remember" admonished the officer in civilian clothes. "For your honour! And for France! Here is a list of the three agents you are to see, together with their addresses—they all live in or around Uskub. Also the sums and the individual instructions you are to give each."

Alexander Ambiatros stared down at a blank slip of paper.

"Sprinkle this on it when the time comes and when you are unperceived" continued his mentor, "and everything will appear. You are, of course, to remain the Athens contractor's agent looking for orders. A car takes you presently to the aerodrome. You will be dropped early to-morrow morning far behind the enemy's lines and you should be in Uskub the same evening. Then go at once about your business without losing a minute."

The speaker was about to add "good luck" but the hypocrisy stuck in his throat. "That is all" he managed, glancing away.

But the man lingered at the door. Fumbling, biting his lips, he made one or two efforts, then blurted out:

"And about returning, sir?"

For a second the Secret Service Chief was at a loss. Then he extricated himself with a wave of the arm and a "don't worry about that. We shall be there in a few days' time."

Great God, what an appalling business was

this calculated coaching of a fellow mortal so that he should walk straight to his death!

"One last request, sir. Should I not come through alive I beseech you to acquaint my wife—here is her address—that I died honourably for France!"

"It shall be done."

The ruse was a brilliant success.

Having fulfilled his mission to the letter, Alexander Ambiatros was duly denounced and arrested at Uskub and sentenced to death.

The court-martial sat on the day following the Allies' triumphal break-through and amid a deadly hostility to the accused; the offensive having been confidently put down for five days later consequent upon the instructions of which he had been the bearer and which bitter circumstance now revealed to have been a blind.

As the firing-squad formed up—the execution was accelerated owing to the rapid advance of the Allies—a Bulgarian officer present quite failed to contain his feelings and observe the decencies.

"They used you as a fool-spy!" he spluttered at the blindfold figure. "Sent you specially across so that we should get you! Serves you right, you Greek swine, for helping the French!"

Only the lower half of Louis Devigne's face was visible. It was seen to fall.

AND SILENTLY STOLE AWAY

It was perishingly cold in the little wireless hut on the Somme.

Things were also very, very quiet.

As if the Arctic cold (we speak of February, 'seventeen) acting upon battle weariness, had lulled both sides gently a-dozing, temporarily numbed.

An occasional light strafe by relatively cosily-located gunners, an occasional air patrol o'er-head in the glistening blue sky of "les grands froids," an enfilade rat-tat-tat now and then or piece of sniper's sport—that was about all, just then, on the tragic, discredited Somme . . . that and Verrey lights by night and never-quite-stilled bird life in the sunlit hours.

The frozen Somme asleep—or as near as it ever got to it. And pretty nearly all one could see, that incredibly sickening litter of the twentieth-century battlefield . . . dud shells, coils of wire, leather equipment, dump and incinerator refuse, broken rifles, bayonets, bombs, tin hats, bones, remnants of uniform, stopgap crosses, mess tins, iron staves, tangled light railway line, rounds of small arm, bully-beef tins, a tank or two, the whole collection crazily strewn across frozen, cratered earthquake.

The indescribable quagmire of preceding weeks of deluge had now caked rocklike; not a pick or a shovel could pierce it. So that what reconditioning of saps and trenches had not already been undertaken, could no longer be tackled. Officers and men just tried hard not to die of boredom or cold or both—though, truth to tell, on the British side not a great number of officers remained, the mania for instructional courses behind the lines having reached its apex.

. . . The all-white Somme, asleep in the last days of February, 'seventeen.

Jerry didn't seem to want to be obnoxious—too almightily cold—so why should we start things? A kind of truce below zero—far below. No raids, few patrols, fewer wiring or working parties. Earth no go. One just burrowed down and tried after fugs. And lots of rum—oh, beaucoup, else many must emulate Scott and Wilson and Bowers.

The coldest winter for nearly fifty years—oddly, since another war in France. Had to be that, hadn't it? Everybody's head swathed in wool. Stamping up and down the semi-deserted, icicled trenches. Better than drowning in mud, though.

Who, elsewhere, was giving a thought then to the hibernating Somme?

Not even G.H.Q.—save routinely—now that Sir Douglas Haig's arrangement with Joffre to

resume the offensive locally on February One had been scotched by Papa's successor.

A wonder, Nivelles. And of such charm, and his mother English. Why—oh, blessing for the Allied arms—Mr. Lloyd George could even talk English with him!

No Somme resumption on February One, had ruled Nivelles. April instead. And higher up. The Britanniques pressing one pincer point at Arras, while the glorieuse Armée Française dented upwards towards Laon.

Why, indeed, should one bother any longer about the Somme—that graveyard of reputations and, incidentally, of those who waited not for tribunals or armlets?

In Blighty, people were up to their necks in meat tickets and U-boats and air raids.

In the Fatherland, all eyes were on the wondrous thrusting nach Osten of Falkenhayn and Mackensen, or upon the slowly slipping Russian fabric.

"Things seem to have gone to sleep in the air as well as on the ground" observed the Officer in Charge of the perishingly cold little wireless hut on the Somme.

"Looks like it, sir."

"Not a single Boche intercept or compass bearing since yesterday morning, eh?"

"No, sir. And funnylike, as you'd say, even then."

The R.E. subaltern continued for some little time trying to pick up anything opposite. Now he would jam on the earpiece of the intercepting instrument and listen intently for the familiar, high-pitched telefunken note of the German short wave field station, or trench set. Now he would nudge his corporal aside and try his luck with the direction-finder—the gadget that marvellously gave one a magnetic bearing on sending enemy stations. Adjacent “compass stations” ten miles north at Arras and as many miles south, at Albert, would be taking similar bearings, and where the trio of bearings intersected—well, there, approximately, was the location of your transmitting enemy station. Such was the purpose of these hush-hush eavesdropping posts: the compass location of German trench sets and the overhearing, with separate intercepting gear, of all that they said to one another in cypher or in code; and a gaily pencilled map pinned to the canvas wall of the perishingly cold little hut on the Somme demonstrated how efficaciously the thing was being done. According to it, each enemy division wedged in the line opposite possessed nine or ten wireless stations—chiefly at regimental and battalion headquarters. There they were for the Fourth Guard Division at Thiépval: AKQ, AKL, AKV, AKZ and the rest. Dotted lines indicated which stations usually spoke to which, and files retained all that was said between them.

Thus, AKZ was clearly regimental H.Q., both on account of its rearward position and because the same battalions were always speaking to it about stores and discipline and reliefs and leave. Speaking in cypher, of course, or even in code. But that didn't make much odds. The toughest code the Germans ever evolved on the Western Front—that called after good Prince Rupprecht—puzzled our experts for precisely three (or was it four?) days and nights, back in Cork Street, W. There was never any such thing as a secret wireless code. So much so, that frankly, all concerned were rather bucked about the functioning of this new wireless branch of "I," of this new invisible watching of an equally invisible foe. One learnt so much about the interior economy of the hostile divisions opposite, about their general life and morale, even, on occasion, about their plans. And this all went into the general Intelligence "pot." One morning it would be a Fritzie colonel cursing some of his company commanders for bad wiring; another day, some chance intercept or piece of deduction would show that a regimental relief was imminent . . . when heigh-ho! for the deuce of a strafe, timed to the minute. One also got to know from wireless bearings the location, often to a few score yards, of Jerry's headquarters opposite—divisional, brigade, regimental, battalion, which was good when fire on ticklish points would be ordered, while it also

helped in keeping up the Enemy's Order of Battle map and in detecting changes in line. A further yield—because each German Army had a code of its own—was that one was usually able to check army boundaries by noting where one enemy code left off and where a new one commenced. And that, also, was important inasmuch as Jerry was wont to recast his army boundaries prior to offensive behaviour . . . indeed, the first we knew that we were definitely for it south of the Somme in 'eighteen, was when the three best German assaulting commanders, Below, Hutier, and Marwitz, crowded into the line opposite us there; and that ominous clustering of talent was confirmed if not first detected by wireless as each of the new army commanders took over . . . with a different army code.

"Well, I'm off, Corporal" announced the R.E. subaltern after half-an-hour's vain hunt, in silence, for enemy stations. "You know where to send for me if Brother Boche finds his tongue."

"Very good, sir."

There was no such thing as "hours" on the Somme. Corporal Jones was there till midnight—it was then three in the afternoon—and his spell would probably have been longer had not someone in authority decided that nine hours was the limit during which a wireless operator

could be expected to remain keen of mind.

For relaxation, Corporal Jones could smoke gaspers, drink tea, devour detective fiction, and crouch over a sulking, smoking stove. The fiction reading, while listening-in for enemy stations, was rather a tour-de-force, but Corporal Jones had become such a highly skilled automaton that he could do it. He could also beguile the time by occasional bursts of conversation with his clerical assistant, a private, but the latter was no good at wireless and couldn't relieve him.

Thus it was, that late February day of 'seventeen, as evening merged into night on the Somme. And still with "nothing doing" in the ether.

It may have been ten o'clock when a rather bored and jaded N.C.O. (who had long finished his day's thriller) of a sudden became all attention and, leaning over his compass with a swiftly-ejaculated "*Ah!*" twirled the pointer lightly to left and right roundabout a bearing of seventy degrees.

He had found a Boche field station transmitting opposite. At last!

"Crumbs" Corporal Jones warmed to his work, "but this is funny. AKV . . . AKV" (he alertly scanned the map of German field stations pinned to the wall) "AKV's a battalion headquarters holding the front line at Thiépval and looks as if it's gone miles back! Hi, Rogers! Morse through to Albert and Arras and ask for

their bearings on AKV. Lumme, here's another tuning up. AKL. That's in the same Fritzie division."

"And that," presently announced the Corporal, whose cheeks were now flushed with excitement, "that seems to have done a bunk too! Run down for Mr. Dell, Rogers. Either there's been a divisional relief . . . but can't be that, it's still the same old Guard Division sending . . . or else the whole bloody German Army's gone back . . . yes, RETIRED! I'm not mad I tell you. What do Arras and Albert say? *What?* There you are, what did I say? Intersection shows AKV right back there almost on the Drocourt Switch. Half a mo and I'll get a ZZ on her!"

Which Corporal Jones proceeded to do; a ZZ or dead minimum bearing being that most accurate of all bearings, one taken just as the German telefunken note faded out into nothingness consequent upon hyper-delicate manipulation of the direction-finder.

"Well, Corporal, gone balmy from the cold? What's this tripe about Fritz having thrown in his hand?" Lieutenant Dell was blowing into one of his.

Corporal Jones, who was a very intelligent young man, was pale and he was quivering a little, but not much.

"No, sir. Not gone balmy at all, sir. The

Fourth Guard Division has gone back five miles and is carrying on, jabbering away just as if it were in the front line. Have a look at the intercepts, sir. And all ZZ on the compass, sir, here and at Arras and Albert . . .”

“*But . . .*”

“And that’s not all, sir. Albert’s just morsed through that it has located the Ninety Second Division also chatting front line stuff five miles back from where it ought to be.”

“*But, but show me!*” (the Officer in Charge almost clutched at the readings). “*This may be a blind, but if it isn’t we’ve done the finest bit of Intelligence in the show!*”

In point of fact, they had—done the finest bit of Intelligence in the show. Or pretty near, anyway.

For that was how we first got to know for certain of the historic retreat to the Hindenburg Line. Through that compass intersection on AKV showing it five miles behind where it ought to have been and gaily chirping for trench stores.

There had been suspicions, but nothing stronger.

Very nearly all the rest is history—how the Germans, learning from our almost bloodless removal from the Peninsula in the dead of night, had put much the same stunts into practice on the Somme, so that we should think

D

all remained as usual while actually they were folding their tents like Lawrence's friends and silently stealing away. The same stout lads were left behind, this time in field-grey uniform, to snipe and machine-gun and send up Verey lights for days and nights after their comrades had withdrawn far, far behind. The same (camouflage) shelling continued; the same old smoke fires were allowed to curl into the air, to be duly noted by our lynx-eyed observers; the same "Jack Johnsons" came tumbling over.

Perhaps the German trenches *were* a little quieter than usual—but haven't we said that that was attributable to the cold?

As for Lieutenant Dell and Corporal Jones, they soon passed out of the picture. But not before the former had to endure rather a trying morning under the cross-questioning of quite important but sceptical officers, the while preliminary arrangements were being made up forward to test the accuracy of the stunning information . . . "feeling" tactics which were to lead to the additionally distressing discovery that the enemy had been gone several days.

On which note we may close; unless it be to add, by way of a pendant, the aggrieved comment of an infantryman (who lost his leave in the excitement), as uttered long afterwards on his hearing this tale:

"Why couldn't the ruddy wireless have kept quiet about it?"

BLUDDIE

THE one reason the two of them had come to Point K, consisting of several Red Cross trains drawn up two versts from the line in the vicinity of the Russian fortress of Novo Georgievsk, was—so far as Second-Lieutenant Manning could discern—the presence there of Sister Nadia, that somewhat startling Slav (“the kind that stick pins in their lovers for the thrill of the thing,” thought Manning) whom they had met two weeks before in Petrograd at the outset of their mission to the Russian Front.

Manning’s senior officer, Major Bloodcote, had fairly taken the bait, and now here they were: two perfectly good British officers doing damn-all, tucked up in rugs in a captured corridor train, while Neuve Chapelle was being fought.

Certain demi-official observations, dropped by Captain Devon in the War Office the day before they had sailed, had prepared Manning for possible curious happenings, yet not quite for this total disregard by his senior of the fact that there was a war on at all.

“Let’s see your book of words,” Devon had laughed; and on Manning carefully unfolding his treasured instructions and movement order,

the red-tabbed Regular, with the merest glance at them, had continued:

"Well, that's mostly eye-wash. I oughtn't to be telling you this, but fact is, I hope to see you back here, or rather over in France, as soon as the works start really functioning. Jolly hard luck you being pitched upon and sent out to Russia just because you seem to be the only young officer in sight who knows the lingo."

"But I don't call it hard luck, sir."

"Well, take a cue from old man Asquith and wait and see. What I was going to say is this: Reason Major Bloodcote's being sent to Russia is three parts because the funny old Russkis have been complaining that we're not taking enough notice of them, and one part because Bloodcote's at a loose end. There's nothing—*nothing*—to observe in the supply and transport services of the Russian Army—take it from me—that is the slightest use observing or that isn't being adequately attended to already by our excellent attachés on the spot. But forget about that. And remember this: There's a hell of a leakage on the Russian side of vital information not only affecting our noble Allies of the East, but, damn it all, concerning ourselves and the French as well—what we're going to do next, state of our preparations and all that kind of junk. My belief is that somebody's gone groggy right up top-side, but that's only a guess. Main thing is, if you can bring back any definite information

so that we may set about plugging things up, you will have deserved well of your King and country. But, mind—I've said nothing. Bye-bye, and 'ware the Russki ladies. I hear they're sans pitié."

Later that same day, seated in the bay window of his club in Piccadilly, Major Bloodcote, tanned and heavy and whisky-and-soda in hand, had had occasion to survey his new aide.

"Wessex, eh? Damn fine regiment—or was. Got any rifles yet? Haw-haw! Hell of a fine war! Steward! Two spots. Well, so we're off to Russia, eh? Hear you can sling the bat like old Rodjestvensky himself! Got plenty of woolly-woollies? Young officers should always have plenty of woolly-woollies."

In his acute nervousness at being in such a place, at such a period, all surrounded by real Regulars back limping and spliced from Ypres and Plug Street, Second-Lieutenant Manning, K.I., was about to agree when, mercifully, two fellow-members fell upon Bloodcote, one assailing him playfully with a crutch and exploding: "God bless my soul, Bluddie! What's this I hear about Russia? Takin' over from the Grand Duke? Scott's and the Empire to-night, I *think!*" And in the immediate chin-chinning that had ensued, the raw interloper had sidled away.

Subsequent to that, one night at a "do" in

Petrograd, a former brother officer of Bloodcote's had waxed loquacious over copious vodka and zakouskas which (as it turned out) he was under the impression comprised the whole meal.

"Stout lad, Bluddie. Shot in the giblets at Graspan. West Coast. Blackwater, gin, gramophones, liver—but none of the native stuff! None of that about Bluddie! White as you like and as many as you like, but no *café-au-lait*! White label every time! Ha-ha! Lord knows what he's doing out here, though. Still ornamental, of course, and game as you make 'em in a scrap, but grey matter under-developed. Suppose he couldn't quite straighten out that brigade show at Wipers (zakouska, gulp, zakouska). Anyhow, there's one good point about it—you won't have much trouble with Bluddie, provided you keep him in whisky and French novels. Perfectly good soldier—does what he's bally well told without chattin' about it like most of you young civilian helpers are so damn fond of doin' nowadays."

Beyond that—one month after taking up his present appointment—Manning had learnt nothing further, either about his senior officer or what it was intended they should do. One month! Probably ten thousand more of our fellows had gone west since then—possibly the battalion might even be going out. And what had he—sound of limb and twenty-two—been doing? Sightseeing in Norway and Sweden and

overdoing everything in Petrograd! No way out—had to keep at Bloodcote's elbow for interpreting purposes.

Shaking himself free of his rugged-up lethargy, Manning stood up in the carriage.

"Something groggy right up top-side."

Really this ghastly inaction in a snowed-up siding was getting a bit too thick! Tethered to a nursing sister. Top half convent, hips down Paris, and the Angelski major her new toy.

Hang it all! Everything that happened here—or *didn't happen*—must tell on our fellows in France one way or another. Surely Bloodcote would agree to that? So how could they go on sitting here indefinitely doing nothing, all decked out in pretty khaki? It wasn't his fault if he was still keen. Briskly, Manning stepped out into the corridor and entered the adjacent compartment, saluting.

"Well, young feller-me-lad?" from a smoke-laden corner. "Just in time for a hot one."

"Don't you think, sir . . ."

"Eh, what?" The Major cocked an eye.

"Nothing, sir."

"Oh, come, come!"

Manning was looking out across the snow. "Funeral passing, sir."

The Major rose, and stood awhile. Then, after snugly refolding himself in his corner, he appraised his junior officer.

"My good and earnest young man (between

pipe puffs), it occurs to me that the trouble with you is that you think that you—you personally—can influence this ruddy war. Not by as much as a flea's backside you can't! We're here awaitin' orders. Awaitin' orders, d'you see? They know at Barano . . . what the hell's the name of the place . . . they know that we're here, and it's up to them to tell us what to do next. When you've soldiered a bit longer you'll learn that it's sound policy to lie doggo and not to make work that doesn't already exist. As a matter of fact"—the Major chuckled—"we're doing quite a lot by being here just where we are. The Russkis are seeing and admiring us, and I have it on the best authority that our regular morning habits have created a profound impression."

So it fell out that the humdrum field service life of the trains continued: eternal cards, tea, cigarettes and gossip, novels and letters home, punctuated by bursts into song, flirtations with the sisters, and occasional runs into Warsaw for comforts, or calls by distinguished visitors to the Front or by war correspondents, and hardly a scrap of exercise.

There was almost a complete hospital lull, and in their odd way the Russians accepted the unexplained presence of the two Angelski as quite in the normal run of things. They had arrived through local Corps headquarters in the

proper manner, and Sister Nadia knew them. How much she knew one of them would be a subject for low-voiced exchanges between the younger medicos and train officers when the other sisters and the priests had retired for the night. The "Commandant Angelski," confound him, was certainly now the most favoured at Nadia's mandolin musicales in her compartment, which she had fitted out to resemble a studio and so bring back to the wilds of Poland her Paris painting days.

Still . . . he seemed such a duffer for the witty and daring one! Certainly it couldn't last. Meanwhile . . . nitchevo!

When the gossip took on this hue, Manning, if within earshot, discreetly made his excuses; but to much of the other chatter and war "shop" he listened with avidity. One day Dr. Miliukoff came, and he learnt all about the Russian Zemstvos, or attempted local council rule—the last fling of the moderate reformers. Another day it was the one-armed French General Pau, side-tracked out here after leading the first impossible assault in Alsace. Or the whole of Point K thrilled to the passage of the adorable Sister Tatjana, second daughter of His Majesty the Tsar.

And then there was that priceless bird, Bayard O'Neill.

Bayard O'Neill was an American correspondent—according to his own showing, for

most of the American Press—while he also laid claim to the rank of captain in the United States Reserve. An amusing cuss, full of racy yarns stretching from San Juan Hill to Kirk Kilissé, Major Bloodcote had taken him in hand as a kindred spirit, and before their first night of acquaintance was out they had become mutually “Bluddie” and “Bayardo”; and a brace of Scotch had done duty.

Not long afterwards, however, Manning was extremely interested to learn that the Russians were not at all so pleased about Bayard O'Neill's visits to Point K. It appeared, in fact, that the man was suspect as an enemy agent, and trained young British “Intelligence” ears were at once pricked up when the O.C. of the train became more explicit in the matter.

“It has been noticed that this American's visits to points along our front are almost invariably followed by heavy and mercilessly accurate shelling of our local batteries. It is believed that somehow he is managing to give their positions away. But how?”

“Secret wireless,” suggested someone.

“He admits visiting Hindenburg's headquarters on his travels,” hazarded a second.

“Yes,” endorsed the Russian colonel. “It is in itself a raging scandal that this neutral with much military experience should be allowed to cross from one army to the other. Heaven knows what he may not be in a position to tell

the Germans, meeting as he does with so many well-informed people up and down our front, some of whom may be spies. He may be the finest carrying agent in creation. But that doesn't explain the battery business. These batteries are sometimes annihilated less than forty-eight hours after he has left. It takes him seven days to get round to Germany via Sweden."

That was all of import that was then said. But for Manning, a hare had been started which was to send him off on long solo trudges day after day over the desolate plain—head down, eyes riveted to the snow.

"Something groggy right up top-side."

Supposing this American lad were part of it? Wonder if the Major could throw any light on it? Of course not! Nevertheless, on his return from one especially agitating tramp, Manning decided to acquaint his senior with what was in the air.

"What, old Bayardo a spy?" was the sequel. "What rot! These Russkis will be sayin' we are next! He's a war correspondent. How could a pen-pusher have the intelligence to be a spy, eh? Glad you mentioned the old louse, though, because he left some of his junk here, and we're for the Carpathians on Saturday. Chit through from the Mission."

"Did he, sir? What sort of junk?" Manning scarcely read the proffered chit.

"Oh, usual journalistic twaddle. Night he

had one over the odds—when he wrote what he called his ‘Splash for Noo Yark,’ whatever in hades that was. You remember. There it is under the baccy jar.”

“May I look through it, sir?”

“Do what you damn well like with it.”

As he withdrew to his compartment next door, the mere handling of the papers O'Neill had left behind sent a professional thrill through the younger officer. Scattered typewritten and pencilled sheets—that was all they were; yet Manning began concentrating on them as methodically as if they had been obiter dicta from the great Ludendorff himself. (Weren't they a suspect's writings?)

“They may be the usual stuff on the surface,” the self-constituted intelligence officer decided ever and anon, as a fresh item in the collection joined the already examined sheets on the seat beside him. “And then again . . .”

Meanwhile the carriage seat came gradually to be spread with a war correspondence exhibition in miniature: with the false starts of flamboyant “stories,” with the carbons of two entire cable dispatches to New York and a sequence of short “service” messages to and from the office, with scribbled notes and snatches of interviews jotted down on tours of the line. Yet turn and twist these as Manning would, nothing like a clue arrived.

Lunch-time came and went without his noticing it.

He was beginning to consider the affair a wild goose chase when, of a sudden, and among the very last of the litter, a pencilled sheet gripped him from the instant he took it up.

An expected trail had been struck.

Yet to the layman that penultimate sheet would have meant less than nothing, containing, as it did, but a brief pencilled list—eleven, to be exact—of well-worn clichés in current use by war correspondents on the Eastern Front. Upon Manning, however, this exhibit had the strange effect of causing him to rise up and twirl round with glee.

“Got him! *Got him!* GOT HIM!” came in crescendo succession. “Only reason a bona fide correspondent would note down clichés would be to avoid using them, wouldn’t it?” a brimming-over young man shot out at the world in general. “Well, let’s see if Captain O’Neill’s avoided using them!”

In a twinkling Manning had the carbon copies of the American’s last two dispatches spread out before him; a few minutes more, and he had triumphantly underscored in blue pencil the exact eleven clichés figuring on the pencilled list beside him. Six had been employed in one dispatch and five inserted in the other. Not a doubt about it! O’Neill had deliberately picked these clichés out from a larger list, in observance

of a fixed code for conveying information. Manning's theory was watertight.

But—his initial elation subsided—there then occurred this important consideration: What to do about it? Tell the Major and get action that way? Not a dog's chance! "Not our pidjin." "Lookin' for trouble."

Well . . . *what?*

Rapidly Manning reviewed the position. They were leaving in three days' time. The Major would certainly want him to run into Warsaw before then. Supposing (a germ took root), supposing he took a header "regardless," as the saying went, asked for a two-day extension, and hurried to Russki G.H.Q.? Denison of the Mission was a live lad and might function. Only two hundred odd miles. Easily get back by Friday night. . . .

"So you want to go Warsaw-ing to-night, eh, young feller-me-lad?" Major Bloodcote joshed his junior. "Seen something in the Ghetto? Well, I have no objection, provided you're back in time for our flit south and bring along any light literature you see."

Such were the circumstances leading up to Second-Lieutenant Manning being next morning ushered into the presence of the Russian head of "I" branch at Baranovitchi.

In ready Russian, and to a listener nodding comprehension, the young khaki visitor speedily

expounded matters, making things clearer with illustrations from the incriminating dispatches and cliché code.

"You see, sir," he explained, "each of these clichés conforms to a pre-arranged code. Take when he says here, 'The morale of the Russian troops in the Przasnysz sector continues to be excellent.' On his list, you see, the sector is left a blank to be filled in. As likely as not, when filled in, this cabled cliché may mean 'the Russians have brought up reinforcements to the Przasnysz area.' Probably he has a long list of innocent-looking clichés to which the censors have grown accustomed. Before writing his two dispatches from Point K, he went through this full and extensive list in his customary way and picked out and jotted down the clichés corresponding to the particular information he wished to transmit secretly in those two dispatches. These clichés happened to be eleven in number—hence the eleven scribbled clichés among the stuff he left behind. It's the fastest means of getting round information that I've heard of, sir. What he cables to his paper in New York one day is understood by somebody there and re-cabled in code back to Germany the next."

"It fits in, it fits in," warmly acknowledged the Russian Intelligence chief after further probing. "For the final proof we shall go through his previous dispatches. Fortunately they are mostly here, for we have a dossier on

this American. He shall be watched, too, when he returns, and so we shall know the ones he holds to meeting on our side of the line. Bigger fish than this journalist may be caught. But it is necessary at present to say nothing whatever of this affair—you understand?"

"Not a word to a soul, sir," eagerly agreed Manning, who was thinking what the Major would say if he saw him at that moment.

"The last name to be added to our list of people associating with this man O'Neill," laughed the Russian General, holding out his hand, "was your Major Bluttgutt! Now, instead of suspecting him, I shall be heavily in his debt for what he has done. You will, of course, stay to lunch."

Not long after, though not particularly to his surprise—after all, this sort of thing was always liable to happen in war—Bluddie was decorated with the Cross of St. George, First Class, "for special and meritorious service."

THE LOST DIVISION

By forced marches the Division had managed to reach the Menin area, from the Belgian coast, before the Germans attained the same country in the outflanking race to the sea of the first October. This particular British formation had been landed at Ostend as part of the plan to save Antwerp, but on the latter precipitately falling, it had been deemed advisable to link it up without delay with the main British contingent then lining up for the first battle of Ypres. Isolated, the Division was useless.

The British C.-in-C. had developed one of his most obstreperous moods on learning that the proposed Antwerp operations were not to come under his command, claiming that all British troops in Belgium and France should be, and now he was awaiting with an impatience not untinged by satisfaction the reporting of his most recently recruited divisional commander. Force of circumstance had compelled the War Office to abandon its latest scheme to weaken him!

But this reporting was not so easy. The general situation was very confused. The B.E.F. had been railed north to various centres from the Aisne, and each day it was taking up new dispositions. Only the cavalry was in intermittent

touch with the enemy, who was doing exactly the same opposite—namely, detraining, lining up, and “feeling” for the coming clash. It was an interlude when very much depended upon units and formations keeping touch with one another and upon G.H.Q. retaining contact with the whole.

It was, in fact, the day, the primitive day, of the dispatch-rider, of the motor-cyclist, suddenly become the most important member of the B.E.F. as he snorted from temporary headquarters to temporary headquarters, bearing reports of the latest moves and contemplated moves and of the general order of battle situation. The roads of the Pas-de-Calais buzzed with these messengers of Mars as to and fro they tore, courageously doing their bit towards keeping the British Army welded into a united, nerve-directed entity. Yet their courage was often rewarded by failure. They would career plumb into a Uhlan patrol and be laid out. Or they would be spotted silhouetted against the Flemish skyline and be machine-gunned from distant cover. Some of the worst mishaps occurred through D.R.'s being wiped out in this manner while on important missions. Some would get through; others would not. In the sequel there reigned a constant perplexity as to the fate of vital messages. Unless the dispatch-riders reported back—which wasn't always so by any means—generals anxious to give informa-

tion of themselves could never be certain whether they had succeeded in doing so; while, conversely, other senior commanders would await the arrival of messengers who had lain many hours stiff and cold on the roadside.

It was an intensification of this problem which now faced the G.O.C. of the isolated division that had reached Menin on its own and coming from an opposite direction to the main B.E.F. It wasn't as if he were just a normally placed divisional commander seeking to keep touch. Rather was it the exceptional case of a whole new force urgently desirous of grafting itself on, as it were, to the main body, of whose whereabouts it had but the vaguest idea, as it also possessed but the haziest notion of the enemy and his adjacent acts.

"Any news of that third D.R.?" inquired the G.O.C., coming out into the courtyard of the farmstead which formed his headquarters of the day.

"Not yet, sir."

The G.O.C. consulted his wrist-watch. A tall, lanky figure, and usually given to rough mirth, his brows now contracted in seriousness. But he said nothing; merely returned to his front room "office."

For a while, within, he studied a large-scale map pinned to the wall. Then he made a pencil-mark on it and spoke, without turning, to his

chief staff officer. "I expect it's roundabout here that they're being intercepted—they're probably Germans in the woods. Don't like the look of things at all. Much better scrap if we've got to than be caught like rats in a trap through waiting on G.H.Q. Must report, though, or else Jackie will go up in the air again and say I 'withheld co-operation.' Co-operation forsooth! Lots of co-operation possible when the only means of communication we've got are D.R.'s who get scuppered all the time. How many's that to-day? Three?"

"The third one's not quite due back yet. Do you think we've absolutely exhausted the possibilities of wireless, sir?" went on the chief staff officer, keeping strictly to business.

Mention of the word brought the general abruptly up in his restless pacing. "Wireless? Don't mention it to me again! What's the good of wireless when we haven't got the code? How can I send all my dispositions in clear? Jerry would merely intercept them. And then there'd be the very hell to pay—stellenbosch all round. I suppose before this show's ended we'll all be chatting to one another with pocket sets, but for the moment, as our Indian friends have it, na poo!"

"I wasn't thinking of *us* sending, sir, so much as of G.H.Q. sending *to* us. Supposing we try just one final D.R., and give him a note asking the C.-in-C. to confirm receipt by transmitting

on such-and-such a wave-length the one word 'Received,' or some code word for it like 'Sausages' . . . anything. We could be listening-in."

"By Jove! not a bad idea, not a bad idea at all!" endorsed the G.O.C., bringing down a hand in friendly approval on his second's shoulder. "Let's get things going at once. Sausages will do, and you arrange with the O.C. Signals with regard to the listening-in and get the best remaining dispatch-rider that can be found. Poor devil! I don't envy him."

That dank and murky afternoon in the Menin farmstead was an occasion of augmenting anxiety. The D.R. had only to go some thirty or forty miles, it was believed, to reach the C.-in-C. Yet, two, three hours went by and no confirmatory "Sausages" came through the ether.

"Scuppered like the others," decided the G.O.C., stumping the courtyard, followed at a distance by a brood of wondering little Flemings. "Sending us out here without the wireless code and without an aeroplane was just about the limit. What's to be done? The C.-in-C. hasn't got an inkling of how we stand—hardly of what province we're in!"

Presently the tension was somewhat relieved by the mess orderly announcing that dinner was ready; but the general and his staff filed in to a

melancholy meal, whose silence was only broken by next-door kitchen romping and resultant squeals under maternal correction. A Damoclean sword of grimmest uncertainty dangled above the heads of all present, from the junior A.D.C. up. Here was the Division, on its first real night of active service, as good as cut off—its situation unknown to G.H.Q., and itself hopelessly in the dark as to what was happening all around. That things *were* happening was only too painfully evident from that day's toll of four D.R.'s. Strung out over all the neighbourhood were many thousands of British troops of all arms whose presence in the battle line was most urgently needed, yet whose weight—through a silly wireless oversight—could not immediately be brought to bear. There was also the strong chance of the Division being surrounded and either decimated or captured. The suspense was pretty acute.

It was broken by the G.O.C. suddenly throwing down his napkin and rising. "Send me the wireless officer," he said, and taking a sheet of paper from the breast pocket of his tunic.

"I can't stand this any longer," he added, addressing his chief staff officer. "I'm going to send in clear."

"*Phew!*"

"Can't help it. Thought it all out—all angles. No other way. If Fritz has got to know our dispositions the C.-in-C. will know them

also, and that's better than nobody knowing them. Present groping's the sort of thing that leads to disaster. I feel we're on the brink of it. Intuition. Not often wrong, either, with intuition."

An awed silence ensued, pending the coming of the wireless officer.

After a short while the latter, a second lieutenant rejoicing in the nickname of "Sparks," was ushered into the presence of the mighty.

"I want you to send this bulletin off at once," ordered the G.O.C. "You understand? Complete priority over everything and anything."

"Very good, sir."

. . . But it didn't happen to be so "very good."

Once outside, "Sparks" discovered to his dismay and horror that the communication he had been ordered to send was in clear—that he was being ordered to put into the air precise details of the Division's current order of battle. It was absolutely against regulations to do such a thing—to think of doing such a thing. He would be letting his corps down—disgracing it. But how could he refuse to transmit? Well, he would jib. The G.O.C. must be warned; told of the effects transmission would have. The enemy would simply pick up everything. . . .

Trembling with agitation, "Sparks" turned

in his tracks and knocked at the mess door. An A.D.C. appeared.

"Will you please tell the General that it is impossible for me to send this message. It is in clear. Regulations prohibit."

"I'd advise you to think that over, sonny," said the A.D.C.

"I've done so."

"All right. Wait here a jiffy."

"Sparks" waited.

While waiting, he heard through the door his ultimate military fate being forecasted in no uncertain language.

"Tell that young man," the General was saying, "to start transmitting that bulletin within the next five minutes, failing which place him in arrest for refusing to obey orders in the field."

". . . and that is that," concluded the A.D.C. a moment later, handing back the bulletin to a distinctly perturbed young wireless officer. "I advised you not to."

There was now nothing to be done but for "Sparks" to send off the fateful message conveying so much vital information for the benefit of friend and foe alike. He elected, stoically, to send it himself—slowly, deliberately, for over a quarter of an hour. All in clear.

"Fourteenth infantry brigade occupies the line . . ."

"Thirty-seventh brigade field artillery at . . ."

"Sparks" bit his lips more than once while sending. Dreadful! What would be the outcome of it?

The outcome of it was unexpected. One learnt of it many weeks later. The enemy intercepted "Sparks'" message right enough; concluded that no general in his sane senses could commit the enormity of sending such information in clear about his effectives if it were the truth; determined, therefore, that the transmission was a trap—that this particular British Division was not located at this critical juncture as its commander said it was—and proceeded to modify plans and take up fresh dispositions accordingly.

The taking up of these fresh dispositions by the enemy contributed in distinct degree to the isolated British formation round Menin being able to join up with the rest of the B.E.F. in the Ypres-Bailleul area next day.

And there is a merry postscript to add to this tale of "I."

When taxed subsequently with the dimensions of the risk he had taken, our G.O.C. blithely retorted that he had banked on the Germans doing precisely what they did do—pick up the message and adjudge it a hoax.

Among those present there were gasps when this daring exculpation was essayed. But it may well have been so, for that G.O.C. was destined to have a very brilliant future.

THE DESERTER

"ALTOOGOESTHERE!"

"Kamerad! Kamerad!"

The words came in a hoarse straining through the pre-dawn lull of No Man's Land at Laventie, a rapidly loosed-off Verey light telling the rest:

A German was up against the British wire trying to surrender.

"I Kamerad! Hande so!" The would-be deserter agitated his arms, kneeling upright the better to display them in the obscurity.

This was the critical moment.

A steady trickle of deserters was all along cautiously permitted down into the British lines, but many others were shot dead as they pleaded their famous "Kamerad!" from the treacherous darkness beyond the parapet.

On this occasion Fritz had been lucky enough to steer for a saphead whose garrison, that March night of 1918, was a London youth, raw and just out, yet of the intelligent category. Prisoners—particularly deserters—were urgently wanted at that time; therefore, the London youth would make every effort to secure this one.

"Don't move, or I fire!" came amateurishly in English, mere intonation overcoming all

language difficulties. Then:

"Joe! Tell 'em I've got a live Fritz covered here—look slippery!"

There never existed any set formula for ushering in deserters. Some did it this way and others did it that. In the case of the Laventie saphead, the Field-grey, plastered with mud after crawling many score yards on his belly from his own front line, was beckoned in by khaki figures standing all ready, bombs in hand, for the first suspicious move. But he was only too anxious to render the proceedings of desertion as simple and rapid as possible.

It was now growing light, and bacon was sizzling and the early morning strafe was on as the German—a fair young man of good appearance and bearing—was prodded down the slippery communication trench to the accompaniment of a certain facetiousness.

"Come over, 'as 'e? Then 'e shan't 'ave no stinker!"

Others held up tantalising bacon and then golloped it down. But the deserter was chiefly concerned with something else—to wit, with the proximity of the German shells. Verily, that would be the foulest fortune!

Concise orders were out that prisoners were on no account to be tampered with until a trained intelligence officer had first had an opportunity of examining them. Unskilled questioning, it

was explained, was how prisoners were placed on their guard against answering under subsequent examination. However, if fighting units were freely wont to sneer at Intelligence, they seldom were able to withstand the temptation of butting in upon it.

Thus it came about that the local battalion commander was soon exercising his scanty stock of commercial German on the captive, with the object of securing information of a tactical nature bearing on his own immediate sector. How thick was the wire? Were they mining?

The deserter, standing erect between an escort with fixed bayonets, shook his head in non-comprehension as the C.O. sipped his tea.

"Oh, take the idiot away—down to the brainy beggars at Division and Corps!" disgustedly ordered that officer upon his book German running dry.

When a prisoner was vitally needed in a given sector—generally when battle operations threatened there—elaborate preparations were made for his reception. He might almost have been an enemy plenipotentiary instead of a low-down traitor. The deserter, as being potentially more useful to "I" branch, could always be sure of a pleasurable motor-trip back to Division and Corps and Army and G.H.Q.—the quality of the cars improving in ratio to mileage from the line, and the lone captive growing progressively

more certain that the English made war in a very odd way indeed.

In the present instance the young deserter's chauffeur drew up later that morning with a flourish at the steps of a stately château.

The divisional intelligence officer here had been reported on as "good at prisoners"—which was not surprising, seeing that he was a barrister in civil life, used to wheedling evidence from reluctant divorce court principals. To him had gone the honour of having set upon a recognised footing the "régime" system with prisoners—that is to say, instead of them all being examined in a stock fashion, a distinctive nicety of treatment would be dispensed to the varying types.

Thus, "régime number two, I think," was what this officer at once decided and put into action with Common Soldier Hans Spengler, to wit: exit the armed guard, a chair and a cigarette for the enemy, not a note taken down—just a conversational chat opening with an innocuous and obvious: "And why did you come over?"

Hans Spengler was ready enough to say why he had deserted—wished to escape the oncoming offensive, had had his fill. But when it came to particularising about that forthcoming affair he grew less and less communicative, causing his interrogator to ponder: "Odd bird to desert—looks such a stout lad. Good family, too."

Openly, however, that officer's attitude was

one of "Oh, never mind—it really isn't a bit important!"

Yet that it was important, and deucedly so, the "I" officer was thoroughly well aware. A crucial hour, indeed, had been reached on the British Front, and all headquarters knew it. Haig had had to thin out his line perilously, the demoralised remnants of the Fifth Army from Passchendaele holding the most attenuated sector, and Ludendorff was known to have a mighty smash ready.

But where was the first blow coming? That was the question, the tremendous question. Pétain was sure it was going to be on his front. Haig was equally convinced that the initial onslaught was going to fall on his own battle-weary army which had borne the brunt of the campaign on the Western Front for nearly a year. Yet just where? St. Quentin? Arras? Or even farther north? Somehow or other it was no longer possible, as it had been heretofore, to point to a certain sector and say: "That's where the offensive's coming—look at all his local preparations!"

Now here was a deserter, and a bright youth at that, from the Laventie area. Could he be induced to give, did he possess, any information regarding the date or location of the coming attack? The "I" lieutenant at Division tried all his wiles and tricks; sought to manœuvre the fellow into boasting, refrained from paying the

slightest heed to answers which held the germ of valuable information, while pretending to be deeply interested in replies of no consequence whatever. But all to no avail.

Common Soldier Hans Spengler was indeed a hard nut. In fact, his interrogator's patience was becoming a trifle frayed, when along blew superior Corps and claimed the deserter's body.

The barrister officer was not used to being beaten—especially by a deserter—but he had to grin and hand over.

The subsequent examination at Corps H.Q., however, was equally a frost. Hans Spengler was neither stupid nor ignorant, but refused to be drawn out. So presently "Army" telephoned that they were sending for him.

"Knows something, and is jolly intelligent. The little I've got points to Arras for the offensive," was the parting tip of the intelligence officer at Corps to his brainier Army colleague.

Yet oddly enough, the "I" captain at Army headquarters had no greater success with Hans Spengler than Corps or Division had had. Certain category questions the fellow was willing enough to answer, but the moment things got down to bedrock—the approaching Ludendorff offensive—he became as an oyster. One or two remarks that he did let drop pointed decidedly to Arras, much to the brainy "Army" captain's inward rejoicing, yet, after two hours' solid interrogation, affairs had advanced so

slightly as to cause that officer finally to fall back on threats.

"Very well," he blurted out, rising with some show of temper. "You won't answer! I hope you haven't forgotten what you are—a putrid deserter? Do you know what we do with deserters who refuse to say what they know? We send them back across No Man's Land and let their colonel know what they've done!"

"If I am a deserter, it is not that I must betray my Fatherland!" pleaded Hans Spengler. "Besides, it is true what I say—I don't know!"

"Corporal! Take the prisoner away!" was the examining officer's opinion of this. But presently he was reporting to his G.S.O.: "He's as cute as they make 'em, sir. Won't say a thing unless you fairly pull it out of him. What little he has said, though—plus an entry in his diary—indicates Arras."

"Looks to me a clear case for a G.H.Q. pigeon."

"Quite agree, sir."

"Well, better warn them there, so that young Durlinger can get his war paint on."

In this manner it came about that Hans Spengler, deserter, enjoyed his fourth motor-car ride that day—this time back to G.H.Q. in a luxurious Vauxhall, from which he surveyed the gracious rolling landscape, comforted by a sound afternoon meal of bully, bread and tea.

It was dark when the car fetched up, and the

German was escorted to an outhouse and informed in dumb show that the hay on the floor was to be his bed, a hint which required no second telling to a man who had gone for thirty-six hours—and such hours—without sleep.

The German may have slept thus for three or four hours, or three or four minutes, when the door was opened with much clatter to admit a second figure in field-grey uniform. At the intrusion the recumbent prisoner half rose on one elbow. Came the flicker of a smile, and he lay back again. So he was to have company!

Nor did the newcomer—a young private like himself—lose much time in palling up, so glad was he to strike a fellow-countryman. He had lost himself on patrol at Ypres, he explained, and had wandered by mistake up to the English wire.

Spengler readily joined in the talk with his companion of the night, chiefly front-line stuff and hopes of a comfortable captivity. The coming offensive — “Michael” — was also touched upon, Spengler even mentioning the interrogations he had been through, and adding: “They haven’t an idea where Michael is coming! So be jolly careful what you say!”

“It’s Arras first, isn’t it?” queried the other.

“Of course!” endorsed Spengler. “But hush—they may be listening.”

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Not long after sleep came to the occupants of that outhouse, slumber so sound for Hans Spengler that he quite failed to hear his field-grey companion presently stealthily rise and slip from the precincts.

His usefulness to "I" having come abruptly to an end following that single "of course!" uttered to the disguised Lieutenant Durlinger, Spengler was next morning entrained under guard for Havre, en route to a prisoners' camp in England.

But he was once again to cross the thoughts and agitate the minds of certain officers of "I" branch.

That was when, five days later, Ludendorff's offensive crashed forward, from Bapaume to St. Quentin, leaving Arras clean out of it.

Nine months later, when Hans Spengler's turn came to be repatriated to Germany, his mother fainted in her Bonn villa on seeing him.

"But, my son," she half cried on recovering, "we gave you up for dead long since! You were reported missing and we heard nothing more from England or anywhere. Look, here is the War Ministry's information—framed with your Iron Cross and citation!"

"My Iron Cross, mother?"

"But yes! See!"

The young man read:

"For special services of the most courageous and valuable character for which Lieutenant Eitel Eichorn, Security Office, voluntarily offered himself."

"Did they tell you nothing else?" asked that young officer.

"Not a syllable. But what is it? Where have you been? If I had known where you were I'd have written every day and sent you things!"

"That was the worst of the whole business, mother—not being able to write to you, and you thinking I was dead. You see . . ." but the speaker broke off as if still hesitating to tell something.

"Ah, well," he resumed, a little wearily, "Germany's lost the war now. I suppose there's no harm in telling. I became Private Hans Spengler and deserted to the English just before Michael in order to give them false information."

IN THE SERVICE OF ZION

IN the days of long ago—1914—one of the worthiest and most respected merchants in Jaffa was a Jew whom I will call Israel Isaacson. Respected, that is, by his own people, since the very genesis of this respect—his zealous devotion to immemorial Zion—produced just the contrary effect among the governing and dominant Turks, who had him well listed as a shrewd, unquenchable foe of Moslem rule in Biblical lands.

Isaacson had two children, Aaron and Naomi, and to these and to their strict upbringing in Zion he consecrated his life when their mother died. All the Jewish feasts and prohibitions and ritual were observed to the letter at the cactus-enclosed villa where the three lived in proud semi-withdrawal from Jaffa's normal life.

A good example of Isaacson's aloofness and faith in the rebirth of Zion occurred once when a Jewish millionaire from New York arrived in Jaffa on a tour of the Holy Land with his daughter. I will here give him the name of Lincoln K. Braunvogel. While he sought to instil Isaacson—to whom he held an introductory letter—with the idiocy of remaining on in relative penury and isolation in Jaffa when

fortune awaited him across the seas, daughter Esther, tickled to death, was girlishly but effectively "vamping" young Aaron in an adjacent olive grove.

"My gosh! you've never heard of ragtime? Let me show you!"

And Esther shook a leg—a covered, relatively slow-moving 1912 leg—amid the olive trees. And Aaron gaped, and felt queerly stirred. Esther was so pretty . . . and different to Naomi. As for Esther, she thought Aaron an attractive youth—which, in effect, he was: dark and flashing of eye, lithe and classical-featured.

Meanwhile Mr. Braunvogel was inveighing in something like this style:

"But say, Isaacson, you can't stop on here. You're just rotting! What's your bank-roll, anyway? Dare say I'd buy you out with the balance of my circular letter and have enough over to make Riverside Drive! Noo York's your capital now. Million and half of us there, and all the business. And man, what a burg! Worth the trip alone to see our limousines on Fiffav. Guess I've taken a liking to you, and I'll set you up fine. No worries. When you've cut loose from here, you're just one more Amurkan citizen who's made his pile. So push your tombstone on one side and step right along!"

When the Braunvogels had gone, Israel Isaacson called Aaron and Naomi and spoke with

them—a little sadly, maybe, yet with studied distinctness.

“What you have just seen, my children, is that which you will now give me your oath for ever to avoid becoming. You have seen two of your own people who have abandoned Zion and become the hybrids of a Christian race. Such are the people by whom we are judged. You, Aaron, in particular, who will carry on our name, I adjure never to abandon our struggle, for your temptations may well be the greater.”

At the knee of their father, Aaron and Naomi swore to uphold Zion, here in its cradle.

War came to Jaffa. At first it was far away, down in nebulous Rafa and Kantara, and Jaffa was slenderly involved. But gradually, as the English fought their way north in 1916 and 1917, life grew increasingly militarised until, with Allenby's dash on Jerusalem, Jaffa became a point of first consequence behind the Turkish lines . . . and hostilities were brought abruptly home to the Isaacson household by the billeting of several German staff officers in the villa.

For three years the little family had gone quietly about its daily life, ever more self-immolated. The coastal blockade had put an end to all business. The Turks had exercised an ever stricter control on the Jewish population. But the most depressing factor had been the long-standing success, in battle, of the oppres-

sors, since from the very first Isaacson had cherished the hope that here were circumstances—the coming of the English—which might well mean the liberation of Zion. Yet month after month, year after year, the English seemed to be getting scarcely any nearer. Then, of a sudden, their capture of Jerusalem!

“Though I may not live to see them,” Isaacson told Aaron and Naomi, “I feel that great happenings are at hand. We must help. The English are our friends. I believe in their Balfour declaration. We must help them!”

“Yes, father.”

But . . . how?

As luck decreed it, the family had not long to wait before a beacon light flashed full in its face. If the Isaacsons had always hated the Turks and feared and distrusted the Germans, the arrival in the house of Major Weissborn and Captains Erhart and Schweitzer led to scenes of unnecessary harshness that served to show them the only road. The Germans had their mess in the drawing-room; and one of their hobbies was to invite in Turkish officers and hold regular Jew-baiting evenings, at which the Isaacsons would be compelled to attend. Sometimes, also, there would be efforts to lay hands on Naomi.

The Isaacsons became spies for the English. In the town, Isaacson picked out eavesdroppers to bring him the day's gleanings and to find out this and that. Naomi's part was to listen to what

the German officers said, and to rummage among their belongings for letters and papers. Upon Aaron fell the onus of bringing the information over to the English lines, and of coming back periodically to collect more.

Up till then there had been a set formula for effecting this perilous mission. One disguised oneself as a Bedouin and, wandering round the desert flank of the line, left one's footprints in the sand. Each of the more accomplished agents on both sides, from Lawrence and Preusser down, had thus had recourse to the abbas. But the Bedouin wanderer had now come under a shoot-on-sight surveillance—the ruse had become so well known. So Aaron resolved upon a new and audacious expedient. He would row and sail a small boat, from Jaffa, south to a point on the coast behind the English lines and there land with his information, returning north in the same fashion.

It was a night of late autumn in 1917 that this youth, cast in the heroic mould, bade farewell for the first time to his father and sister, whom he could never hope to see openly again until the war had ended—for once his disappearance had been noted, he would have perforce to remain disappeared. But twice monthly he hoped to return, if things went well, when father and sister would have their latest budget of information all ready for him to take away—some jotted

down in a code based on terms used in the Isaacson office, other information to be conveyed verbally by Naomi when the latter stole down to rendezvous with her brother near the villa, in answer to a handful of sand thrown against her window between eleven and midnight. Such was the home-hatched scheme by which the Allies in Palestine became possessed of some of their most useful intelligence in the opening months of 1918—the movement and passage of Turkish and German troops, their plans in the event of further set-back, their munitions reserve, morale. Young Aaron was that invaluable combination: an “intelligent” and a patriot, an agent not working for personal gain. Naturally, he had first to prove his worth; but a spy’s reports can always be checked up against information emanating from other sources, when sooner or later the misleading agent stands revealed. In this case, so much faith had the Allies after a while in this young Jew that they fitted out his craft with an auxiliary engine which enabled Aaron, who always sailed alone at nights, to accomplish his thirty or forty necessary knots, to and fro, in a matter of four or five hours.

All was going swimmingly. Arrived off the Allied landing-place, Aaron would fire two red Verrey lights in rapid succession, be aided in his beaching, and motor inland to G.H.Q. at Lydd

with his reports. Conversely, on approaching Jaffa on the return journey, the intrepid soloist would cut off his engine and, rowing in, make straight for Naomi's window with his handful of sand. When his son's comings were expected, Israel Isaacson—who had grown curiously pro-German and thirsty—would be swilling down potent liquids, duly supplied by himself, in the company of the billeted German officers, who eventually came not to bother a bit who or what he was so long as the good juice flowed.

Yet bibulous men, on occasion, develop keen wits—not unusually in the way of suspecting something—and that was what Captain Schweitzer chanced to do in the midst of one séance on a starry night in the summer of 1918. That Isaacson sought to detain him with more drink merely sent him out the quicker—vaguely after Naomi.

What he beheld from the doorstep, however, was Aaron in the act of throwing up his sandy handful at Naomi's window.

So the little lady had a native lover, eh?

Well, well! And she so frigidly unapproachable with German officers! We should see . . .

Up clambered the Captain to Naomi's room, and, invoking the sudden illness of her father, pushed his way in through the opened door.

"I saw him! I saw your dirty Arab lover down there about to signal for you! Come on, liebchen, quick . . . make no disturbance . . .

if you cry out, I'll tell your father."

With all her strength the young Jewess struggled . . . every second counted . . . so long as Aaron got away. . . .

"OH-HO! What have we here?"

On the floor of the bedroom, fallen from the folds of Naomi's night-robe, where she was wont to keep it in readiness, lay the latest information destined for the Allies.

In the filthy prison of Jaffa (Israel Isaacson was hanged the very next day for knowingly harbouring a spy) Naomi refused to say a word. There she was, huddled with verminous harlots, fed on foul bread and water, at least once a day put through a Turkish form of the third degree which culminated in outrage.

Where was her brother? And her lover? Who else was involved?

Very well, if she would not answer . . . and another appalling scene would be enacted. The rotten little Jewess! Who on earth cared for her or her feelings?

After ten days, and when enormity upon enormity began to pall on her Turkish gaolers, and still Naomi kept silence, torture was decided on. For ten further and consecutive days one of Naomi's finger-nails was pulled out—a nail a day. Then, still mute, she was put out of her agony by an officer's bullet.

On his next clandestine visit to Jaffa, Aaron

heard the whole story. Distraught with grief, with coldest murder in his heart, he nevertheless took a mighty oath and devoted the remaining few weeks of the war to laying minute foundations making for its realisation.

Those fingernails!

A haunted Aaron, but still an eminently practical one.

It is the last week of September, 1918. Before the Crusader-in-a-Rolls, the Turk is fleeing northwards in confusion. Especially on the coast, in the Jaffa sector, the enemy is in utter rout, abandoning everything, engaged in an individual and tattered *saue qui peut*. For that was where our main blow had fallen, and unexpectedly so, thanks in some measure to gallant intelligence work executed in the preceding weeks by Aaron Isaacson who, if he had formerly been a keen agent, had later become as one possessed. For weeks he had journeyed perilously back and forth in his coastal boat, sedulously spreading certain false tidings in devious artful ways. One thing only he demanded of the Allies in return: that he be allowed to enter Jaffa first, with a few companions and in his own way.

Now that day was here; and the entry was simple enough. While the routed Turks sought to escape northward, Aaron and his bravoës landed with some machine-guns in their rear,

and, spreading out across country, killed every Turkish soldier that they could lay eyes on for the rest of the day. Not a plea was heard on Aaron's day of vengeance. Exhausted fugitives were riddled and slaughtered with the rest, the massacre not ending until the arrival of the English.

What a wonderful place was Paris during the Peace Conference! At least, so thought Captain Aaron Isaacson, D.S.O., M.C., as he hopped from a taxi at the Majestic to give further Syrian advice to Lord Barton, of the British Delegation. For that was his official job—and a jolly good one they said it was going to develop into, in the newly-created Jewish State. Men openly envied the brilliant, handsome, and courageous young Jew who had deserved so well of the new Mandatory Power. Stout fellah!

Was it surprising that this youngster in the early 'twenties, who had never beheld the West before, much less Paris during peacemaking should have become as one half mesmerized by it all—by the unparalleled entertaining among eight-and-thirty nations, by the victory-madness, without, in the streets, by the stark admiration of his svelte young form and Eastern looks, by feminine eyes? Ah, the women of Paris, how they rose to the occasion during the peacemaking of Paris! Nor had one to be an

Aaron to deserve the fair; embusqués came off almost equally well.

In the lounge of the Majestic, a waiting dream of beauty, vaguely familiar, rose from an armchair and undulated towards Aaron as he entered, a waft of perfume preceding her.

"Why Mister Hero if this isn't just fine seeing you again half Paris is talking about you say you haven't forgotten the ragtime in the olive grove too bad about your relatives Pop's been getting all the dope at the Embassy why you look just stunning in uniform I've got a dinner date, but we can meet at the Chatoo de Maddrid at eleven . . ."

Perhaps for a minute the imperious flow prevailed, and Esther was gone, Aaron having managed to put in a succession of "yes'es."

Yes, he would be at the Château at eleven—quite certainly.

As he took the lift up to Lord Barton's suite, he was surprised to find himself suddenly thinking of his father. But he was altogether too much in the grip of his surroundings to stop and analyse matters. Besides, here was the Chief's door . . . that lovely Yankee girl . . . her perfume, the touch of her flesh . . .

"Boy, you're just great!" was Esther's greeting some hours later beneath the trees, a-twinkle with coloured lights, of the most seductive of all

Bois haunts. "I'm just tickled to death to be with Captain Isaacson. Where's he putting us? No, I want to be over there so that I can see Maurice and Florence close up."

For the young Jew of Jaffa it was the night of nights. The champagne, the mild June air, the riot of Lanvin and Callot blending with the uniforms of half a dozen of the victorious Allies, the wonderful new jazz music, the spreading greenery, the sheer joy of living all about one. And Esther! Aaron spent most of the time between dances gazing at her, recovering, calming down from the embrace which sent the blood coursing so riotously through his young Eastern veins each time he held her to him anew. Gazing at her as she sparkled ahead as only American girls who are getting a "kick," can do (what fun to become, maybe, the First Lady in the Holy Land, thought Esther; two months with husband and the rest of the year back home exuding romance!); gazing at her, enraptured, from hair to eyes, eyes to lips, lips to neck, neck to bosom, bosom to . . .

"Say, what's the matter, Aaron?" Esther ceased her nervous pastime of drumming on the table. "What are you staring down at my hand like that for? Don't you like my manicure? I think they're just dandy (the speaker held out a flashing quintette of petal-pink, almond-shaped, almost Chineezey finger-nails, brilliantly varnished).

"Sakes, you've gone all goosey! Let's dance!"

"Yes, let's dance," acquiesced Aaron, wiping away beads of perspiration. He had gone quite pale.

"That's the third time you've danced a jig on my toes," pronounced Esther presently. "And I'm sick of being guided into fat old men. Don't you feel too good?" The girl was frowning.

"Perhaps the heat . . . a little champagne . . ." stumbled Aaron, breaking off the dance, midway through.

At the table a maître d'hôtel was waiting.

"An urgent call for Monsieur from the Délégation Britannique at the Hotel Majestic. Monsieur is expected there at once."

"Oh, put the whole bunch on ice!" interposed an already partly-frustrated Esther. "We're at the Chatoo de Maddrid."

"I can't possibly do that, Esther. I must go at once."

"Can't you say you never got the message?"

"No, certainly no. Besides, we always have to leave word where we are."

"Oh, hell—call a taxi then! This political stuff gets my goat."

In the taxi a peeved silence on the one side and a twitching preoccupation on the other. Fortunately Esther's was an hotel at the Etoile, quite near.

"Thanks so much," she formulated as the commissionaire swung open the door. "See you again when you're less busy."

"To-morrow . . ." the susceptible youth was beginning. But Esther was already skipping up the steps.

A minute or two's further run, and Aaron was over at the Majestic.

"Sorry to break in on your evening like this, Isaacson," began Lord Barton, "but I thought you'd better know there's no use in chasing over to London to-morrow after those papers. Position is, the President holds absolutely to what he calls 'sewing this Syrian business up' by to-morrow morning at latest. We presume he means by that that it's got to be finished by then, so I fear you must resign yourself to losing your case. Pity, but . . ."

"At what time are you meeting, sir?"

"Ten."

"The documents will be here, sir."

"And how, pray?"

"I'll get an aeroplane straightaway, sir, at le Bourget."

Lord Barton ceased pacing, and looked his youthful aide in the eyes. For a second it seemed as if he were about to deter him. But what he said, with kindness, was: "As you will, boy."

The inquest proceedings in the Kent farm-

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house were as brief and unsatisfactory as are most aeroplane inquests when nothing but tangled débris and scrap-iron remain. The principal witnesses, two farm-hands, deposed that they were on their way to work just before dawn, when they heard the drone of an aeroplane.

"It all 'appened lightnin' like, sir," said one. "Just crash into the field yonder. One of the young men was thrown out, but we saw 'e was gone, so we went over to the machine. There was another young gentleman pinned under it. We couldn't move nothing, but 'e kep' on moaning and saying something. In deliriums like."

"What did he say? Have you any idea? You see, he was on an official mission."

"Oh, nothing important, sir, nothing important. Me an' my mate can testify to that. Something about fingernails. Yuss, we 'eard fingernails quite plain. Didn't we, mate?"

Accidental death.

CAVELLIANA

THE following was specially obtained from the Prince de Croy (writing anonymously) for the one and only edition of *The Salient*, a Roneo-d Christmas number produced at Poperinghe in 1915, and a few faded copies of which survive in military clubs and messes. It throws fresh and authentic light on the case of Nurse Cavell, who was one of the secret organisation directed by the prince and his wife for the smuggling out of Belgium and Northern France of Allied soldiers who had either lost their units or become stragglers through wounds or exhaustion.

Briefly, the system was to form a rallying centre at the Croy château near Mons, whence the fugitives were passed to the Dutch frontier via a chain of forwarding agents giving them succour and shelter on the way—but only when they were accompanied by guides who were known and when they gave the day of the week as the code word. Nurse Cavell was one of three such forwarding agents located in Brussels itself. There were six guides altogether, three operating between Mons and Brussels and a further trio between the capital and the Dutch frontier.

The Prince wrote:—

“We were in the thick of the first fighting round Mons and Charleroi, and when the Germans had passed through our village our real work began—that of passing parties of officers and men, who were detached or lost, back to England via Holland. For a time, the road to Maubeuge was open, until the besieging force came up, and we aided two cavalry scouts, who refused to be parted from horses and arms, to get away to that fortress, after preventing them from going off to join some Germans singing their (and your) National Anthem. They could not believe it was not safe to make for people who used the tune of ‘God Save the King.’ Many were aided to escape; others remained in the woods for months and months. Some are said to be still there (December, 1915).

“After a time only parties of two and three could be smuggled through, and these had to have false identification papers prepared with forged signatures and stamps. Guides, who made a business of it—professional smugglers and poachers—used to conduct them onwards from Brussels. Getting them to Brussels was not so hard, but crossing the frontier, which is protected by a live wire fence, is now very difficult, and many men—including German deserters, who are very numerous—have been electrocuted.

“There were some touching and humorous

episodes with the local inhabitants. One Irishman, who was safely conducted as far as Brussels, turned back from there to say good-bye to a lady friend at the village at which he had sheltered! Another of the agents for passing men along was a very fascinating widow of forty. Quite a score of fugitives, chiefly English, confided to me that they were coming back to marry her after the war.

"Of course we had some hairbreadth escapes. Once, while we had sixteen men in hiding, a party of forty Germans suddenly arrived to search the house. We bundled the sixteen into a secret chamber, where they had to stay for an hour and a half, while the Germans ransacked the château. They found no one, but consoled themselves for their failure by taking all that was left of the wine.

"One British officer had an extraordinarily lucky escape. He had been badly wounded, but as soon as he was fit he discussed plans with me on one of my visits to where he lay. Shortly before the day fixed for his escape, extra German guards were put on. But he managed to get out of his ward by leaving a dummy in his bed. He had to cross three walls and was just going to drop from the last when, luckily for him, a German sentry below coughed, putting him on his guard.

"He had to wait over an hour on that wall before he could safely come down. But he held

on and subsequently arrived in a state of complete exhaustion at my house, where he woke me up by the pre-arranged signal of a handful of gravel thrown against my window, the exact position of which I had carefully explained. He was hidden for three days in the woods until the hue and cry had died down and then lived with another wounded officer in my house for two months or more, until both were fit to undertake the journey to Holland. A look-out was always kept, and when any Germans turned up the couple would dash to a hiding-place.

“I met several German celebrities, including von Kluck. He behaved himself. Not so the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. When he arrived at one house, which was full of wounded, he proceeded with one of his doctors to ensure that none of the wounded were shamming—in one case pulling a man about whose leg was shattered. Against this, the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was very amiable. He said he knew nothing of military matters, but merely came along to be near his own men. He was kind to our wounded, talking to them and giving them tobacco.

“During the siege of Maubeuge I used to see some of their spies come in to report. The best they had was a boy of fourteen. They also had a girl of seventeen, who bicycled about the country dressed as a Red Cross nurse. The Germans suspected, in turn, that they were con-

stantly being spied on. Belgian men in civilian clothes were freely shot. Also some in uniform. Twelve such suspects were once caught together in a mill. Eleven of them—men—were put against a wall and shot, the mill was burnt, and the miller's wife transported to Germany. I found the German soldiers individually quite nice. It was only when with their officers, or in a crowd, that they became mere wild beasts.

“At last the Germans got wind of what we were doing. One of our best guides was the first man to be arrested, but not before he had managed to warn me. I at once went disguised as a peasant to Brussels, where I had the pleasure of watching the Germans surround and search my town house! In their funny, clumsy, cunning way, they told my household that they only wanted me because they had heard I had recently been landed in the country from an aeroplane and they wanted to question me about it.

“Though I did not know of the wholesale arrests which would shortly follow, I decided to leave the country. It took me a long time to escape, as my first guide to the frontier was trapped by German agents—three men and a woman—who pretended to want to escape and then turned on us. While they were marching us off we managed to overpower the three men. But the woman fired, wounding me twice. Still,

we got away and not long after I was safely over in Holland.

“Almost the next thing I learnt was that the Germans had arrested about thirty people, among them Miss Cavell. They were all kept apart, no one being allowed to be visited even by a lawyer. By cross-examination the Germans gradually gathered a certain amount of information. Of Miss Cavell I always had a very high opinion. When possible consequences were pointed out in the first instance, she calmly replied: ‘We must take the risk. We are doing no harm, only helping our own people. A German woman would do the same.’

“For over a year she was the most skilful and discreet of our Brussels forwarding agents. She must have been instrumental in getting scores to safety, employing ruses of her own invention. But I think it was a great pity that she acknowledged having helped our soldiers to escape. Without her confession the Germans had no real evidence, and I do not think either she or any of the others would have been sentenced.”

The Prince, when he wrote the above shortly after Nurse Cavell's execution, little suspected that somewhat graver consequences than the splitting-up of an heroic little band of Allied workers were about to supervene.

To explain:—

Suspicion was cast on the Croy band through

one of the men Miss Cavell had aided to escape writing to thank her, and the letter being intercepted by the Germans. When confronted with this incriminating document, should its intended recipient have denied all knowledge of the sender, have acted as if the letter were a trap purposely set for her? How can we aspire to judge? That the death penalty lurked for such as dared what she had done, Nurse Cavell knew. Lies not being in her scheme of things, Miss Cavell admitted that she knew the sender of the letter and the admission came as useful fuel to the German prosecutors of the third degree. It gave them ground—a solid basis to stand upon—with the remaining two dozen or so who had been roped in. The familiar stratagem of passing from suspect to suspect and telling each separately that so-and-so had told everything, and that “if you speak up, too, we’ll see that you get off lightly,” was resorted to. And by degrees one or two of the prisoners “said a little.” Other names came to be mentioned.

If the underlying German belief that the Croy chain of forwarders and guides had also furthered Allied espionage, was never substantiated, it presently dawned on von Bissing’s inquisitors that they now had information before them pointing to the existence of a second and more important secret circle, one unmistakably engaged in outright spying for France. Not that there had been any betrayal; only, cun-

ningly contrived questioning of some of the Croy captives had led to answers none too warily given.

The Germans beheld themselves on the brink of falling upon perhaps the main French espionage circle then functioning in occupied territory. For they knew that there existed at that time a fundamental flaw in our Allies' system—namely, that too many of its agents knew each other *as agents*, i.e., that a suspect, if pressed hard enough, was in a position to indicate the identities of his or her co-workers. Playing intricately upon this flaw, the Germans spent three whole months—until January, 1916—laying their net throughout occupied Belgium and Northern France, clue leading on to clue. But no arrests were made. Even where it was patent that this or that individual was an Allied agent, he or she was allowed to carry on so that every move in the game might be shadowed and the net spread ever more comprehensively. For considerably more was now at stake than the mere apprehension and punishment of a company of spies. The problem posed was this: Could an important measure of French spying in occupied territory be blotted out at one fell swoop at a critical moment of the campaign?

Such a moment was approaching.

On the eve of the battle of Verdun, in early February, 1916, the signal to draw in the net was given after a remarkable display of prudent

patience on the part of our enemy. And just at a time when Joffre's headquarters at Chantilly stood most urgently in need of all the information it could get from its agents regarding German troop movements, a radical descent was made upon the French spy system then operating in the occupied territory.

In succeeding days, as Falkenhayn poured his shock-battalions against Verdun, the French could collect practically no news as to what was likely to happen next, and for the good reason that their espionage system opposite had been, if not broken, at least temporarily dislocated. Chantilly even begged of British G.H.Q. for any information the latter could collect from *its* agents in Belgium—a most unusual thing for cocksure Chantilly to do. Especially were our Allies perilously in the dark as to troop movement round the vital rail junction of Hirson. Could we get anything from there? Their local agents had for some inexplicable reason suddenly dried up!

Our Allies never completely re-established their espionage system behind the German lines. Once such a system collapses in war-time—after having been leisurely and securely built up in the years of peace—it is a very difficult matter indeed to reconstruct it, with the territory all around in enemy hands.

As for Miss Cavell, not lightly can she be held responsible for what so unhappily super-

vened. That, in all likelihood, would have occurred anyway. The most that can be said is that perhaps it was "a great pity that she acknowledged having helped our soldiers to escape."

“STRELITZ”

THIS little story opens amid the backwash of Mons. It is the last week of August and the “contemptible little army” has had some six thousand casualties in the opening clash, a third or more of whom have had to be left, wounded, captive, exhausted or hidden, in the territory overrun by Kluck and Bülow.

The Oberherresleitung had scarcely expected such an impertinent performance on the part of Sir John French. If anything, in these governing opening weeks, von Moltke had expected an England landing, in rear, on the Belgian coast. As things stood, he could only guess how many Engländer had crossed the Channel and was fogged as to what they hoped to do. Officers and men of as many as thirty and forty different British units or regiments had been taken—here, there, and everywhere. The whole thing was a hotch-potch.

“Concentrate all available English-speaking intelligence officers in the wake of the retreating English,” ordered the German General Staff, “and see what they can get out of the English prisoners and wounded.”

Such was the signal for the entry on the scene of the subject of this tale—Captain His

Serene Highness the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. H.S.H. had been doing liaison work for his Emperor, about to fix himself in the silvan fastness of Spa, far from the maddening war; but the young officer was obviously all cut out for the job in hand on account of his English Public School and University education. To presence, pull, keenness, savoir faire, he added perfect English of the colloquial kind, and very speedily he might have been discerned putting these attributes into operation among straggling or wounded Contemptibles in the country between Mons and Le Câteau.

The questions at this stage, to which the Germans wanted urgent answers, were of this nature:—

Where did you land? Detrain? What French towns did you pass through? What other regiments have you seen? Your division? Brigade? Name of any generals? What do the English Tommies think of the war? Have you lost heavily? Have you heard anything of General French's plans? What direction is the retreat taking? Back to Boulogne? Havre? With the French towards Paris? Where's your dépôt in England? What troops were still there when you left? What reinforcements were you expecting? When? Landing where? Are the Territorials coming out at once? What have

you heard about Kitchener's Army? How many divisions were at Mons? Who was on your left and right? In support? How many machine guns have you per battalion?

The majority of German intelligence officers chose to put these questions in a bullying tone, and would even threaten their captives with death if they persisted in their refusal to answer or stuck to their exasperating repetition that they'd "landed at Bullogny and were in 'Aig's Corps."

Not so "Strelitz."

From the very first, "Strelitz" was ahead of his kind. He decided, even in those virgin days, that it was no use whatever bullying British prisoners (he never had anything to do with any other); that the Prussian Staff teaching on this score was all wrong and would have to be re-adjusted; and that where the Hague Convention expressly laid it down that all that captives of war need give was name and regiment, it availed nothing to threaten direness one could not carry out; nay, such efforts at terrorisation placed the examining officer at a distinct moral disadvantage. So it fell out that "Strelitz" conceived the notion of palling up to his prisoners instead, of wheedling them into conversation over cigarettes and beer and tea—and never a harsh word spoken.

One might have beheld him, on a certain

ultimate August day of '14, motoring into Brussels and there collecting all the English novels and cigarettes he could lay hands on. And so back into the wooded country of the Belgian Ardennes, there to visit villa and cottage where British wounded lay, and to bestow gorgeous presents of Marie Corellis and Woodbines. And then while the convalescent recipients marvelled at such German kindness (although, to hear him, the fellow really might be an Englishman!), the Grand Duke would proceed on his special tactics of an easy conversational chat, popping in skilfully-turned questions now and then so that his captives should never suspect they were being pumped.

Did "Strelitz" derive much return for his pains at this stage? It is impossible to say. But this much is certain: that whatever information captured Contemptibles may or may not have given away, the enemy Nachrichtungsbureau formed a wholly erroneous judgment concerning this vanguard of the B.E.F., believing that it had been crushed and slogged out of existence, as a serious fighting unit, for many weeks to come—a verdict which was to contribute to the German undoing on the Marne.

As long as open warfare endured, "Strelitz" kept on the move, sometimes by car, at other times mounted. As the winter wore through he became increasingly associated with Crown

Prince Rupprecht's Sixth Army headquarters at Lille. Eventually he was definitely assigned to it with the special mission of concentrating his attention on the dozens and scores of British officers being either captured or left behind wounded in all the severe fighting between Ypres and La Bassée of early '15.

Gradually the Grand Duke perfected his technique as interrogating officer. In addition to a constant supply of English novels and papers and cigarettes, he would offer to write home for the prisoners, not a few of whom—belonging to the Guards and to crack cavalry regiments—he had known as men-about-town in London, in happier days. Indeed, it was the chance remark of one of these which gave "Strelitz" the germ of an idea whose subsequent development was to make him famous in the hidden annals of "I."

"If I didn't know who you were," observed the captive in question, "I'd take you for an Englishman every time!"

"I am—in a way—I suppose," thoughtfully replied the German Grand Duke.

For the Somme, "Strelitz" was lent to the newly-formed German Army detailed to defend that mournful region. In the months beforehand, he had improved his technique still further by dressing up, upon one or two occasions, as a British officer and by posing as such

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beside the genuine captured article in order to draw the latter into frank converse with one (by all outward appearance) of his own side.

This was called acting a pigeon. We had pigeons also, but it was an exceptionally difficult rôle to fulfil. One had to have the necessary accent without flaw; also no small histrionic ability, while an intimate knowledge of the opposing army and its daily life was imperative. For example, if "Strelitz" wished satisfactorily to hoodwink a captured British officer that he—"Strelitz"—was also a captured British officer, a first-hand knowledge of life behind the British lines, no less than in the trenches, was essential. One had to know who Birdie was; and how much Gaby charged for oysters in Amiens; and where such-and-such rest billets were; and, of course, one had to be thoroughly up in all the latest lore of London leave.

What "Strelitz" eventually evolved, on the Somme, was this: he fastened on to a certain British division and learnt all about it almost by heart—who its principal officers were, where it had been, what it had lost, its special grouses—in fact, its entire record. By dint of keeping files over a considerable period, based on information coming from all quarters and appertaining to this division, "Strelitz" thought he had worked out a watertight scheme for his future essays at pigeoning. He would always, when pigeoning, say he belonged to a unit of this

particular division. He would know all about it; could talk freely of its life, and so lull his victim.

Yet, bright and relatively successful as this stratagem was, another destiny lay in store for H.S.H.

In 1917 the air war broke dizzily on the British front in Flanders, Artois, and Picardy. Hundreds of machines took the air daily on either side. The Germans brought down as many as fifty-five of ours on one day alone (April 9). New air staffs sprang into being. “Air Intelligence” became an important reality. For one thing, special interrogating officers had to be trained to tackle the air pilots and observers being captured daily by either side, since the questioning of these necessarily assumed a highly technical nature.

Here was a rare chance for “Strelitz.” He would become an air pigeon! He would concentrate exclusively on the Royal Air Force, would study its life and history just as he had studied the life and history of X Division on the Somme, and, posing as a captured British pilot himself, would take on all shot-down British airmen!

The conception was sound, and “Strelitz” carried it to success.

Firstly, this Grand Duke of feudal domain spent whole weeks cramming every aspect of our Royal Air Force, and not only as it rode the

skies in England and France, but also overseas. He had to have that smattering of flying chit-chat on personalities, so dear to the tongue of mess juniors. He had to know what new machines were building, what others were contemplated. The intricacies of a Sopwith Camel and of a night-bombing Handley-Page had to be his. (Of course, he went up himself and received a sky education.) He had to know several yarns about "Boom," and who the officers were at No. 2 A.D. at Candas. At the tip of his tongue, too, had to be all current flying jargon, and the name of American bars and maisons and even mademoiselles favoured by the R.A.F. And, of course, he had to know the latest location of aerodromes and the general working routine of the Force; and what precisely was Captain Bishop's method, and how it differed from Major McCudden's. He had to have, in fact, the whole gossip of an R.A.F. mess-in-the-field at his finger-tips—its scandals and pettiness, drinking and card-playing, no less than its air grouses and heroism. All these things "Strelitz" had first to cram before making his *début* as an air pigeon, which he did in late '17—Passchendaele time.

Picture a hut at a German aerodrome in Flanders. Richthofen's famous travelling circus is in the vicinity, and one of its flights has been allotted the hut as a mess. There is pre-dinner

joviality, after a hard day, when the telephone rings and the news comes through that two more English have been brought down alive.

“Send them along here!” shouts the mess president. “We’ll entertain them! And ring ‘Strelitz’ at Lille!” (Such, in effect, were standing orders in 1917-18.)

In due course the two youthful captives arrive and are shown into the mess, where they are made more than welcome, invited to dine and wine, their hosts stressing the chivalry of the air.

A few clumsy questions, in clogging English, are put to the prisoners, who say they “don’t know.”

“Dat iss goot,” agrees a voice. “Vee Scharmans answer no also! Trink!”

More wine.

Then a third shot-down British officer—with pilot’s wings and Military Cross—is shown into the mess, to the mimicked surprise of its members.

“Anudder? Diss iss great! Go join your friends up dere!”

“Strelitz” does so.

And for the balance of the port-drinking evening the three captives are left to themselves, to their own gossip—“Strelitz,” in undertones, directing the conversation hither and thither, in impeccable English, while displaying the most intimate first-hand knowledge of the R.A.F. and all its works.

And the port continues to go round and round.

Anudder leetle trink!

Anudder leetle trink!

Not till very near the end were we to know, via an escaped prisoner, of this serious air pigeon business. Then "Strelitz" became a byword; and R.A.F. officers were warned against talking to *anyone*—even in khaki—if captured. One effect of which order would be this comical kind of thing:

Scene: A German aerodrome.

Dramatis personæ: Two genuine shot-down British pilots.

Action: They meet one another.

Dialogue: Scowls of silence.

"Strelitz" came to a sticky finish, being found shot dead on his estate not long after the Armistice. The mystery endures.

TWO BIRDS, ONE STONE

THE two highly-placed Frenchmen—the one political, the other military, but each with a powerful finger in the Secret Service pie—reclined, cigarettes in hand, as comfortably as the bureaucratic furniture of the rue St. Dominique would permit.

“I fully understand what you imply, my dear de Fontenelle,” Colonel Maistre was saying. “You don’t believe that Spain will get up to any serious mischief, even now, but the devil of it is that we don’t *know*, and that consequently just when every available horizon-blue is needed in the fighting line we have to keep important cadres in Morocco, not to mention the watch on the Pyrenees.”

“Frankly, how many utilisable troops would you say Spain is immobilising for us?” The Quai d’Orsay official asked the question bluntly.

“One way or another, little short of two army corps.”

A gesture of surprise escaped the civilian.

“Nuisance! Nuisance!” he commented after a pause. “As you know, our reports from Madrid all strike the same note. The Clerical party and the Hapsburg influence at Court are against us, or rather, are for Austria. So also

is a goodly portion of the officer class. The whole Peninsula is saturated with German propaganda, and there's no doubt that the continuance of the Allies' blockade will be unpleasant for the population as a whole. Against this, the King is for us—or, if you like, for the English—and so, of course, is the Queen. Also most of the intellectuals, among whom—and also with several of the Army and Navy leaders—the conviction is rooted that England will never be on the losing side. The newspapers are *comme-ci comme-ça*, but perhaps they don't count much in Spain. Other elements working in our favour are that finance circles are pleased with the results of staying a neutral, and that Italy shows every sign of coming in on our side. I personally may not believe that the Spaniards would go actively against the Allies in any circumstances that might arise, but that opinion is not shared by everybody over at the Quai."

Now it was the soldier's turn to think things over—calmly and without interruption.

"On the other hand," Colonel Maistre presently began, "they are making no military preparations of special note. All our agents can testify to that. My best man says the General Staff fully appreciates the nature of the obstruction of the English at Gibraltar—not to mention the possibility of a Portuguese diversion on the flank. That's naturally what mainly concerns our branch. We leave—how shall we call it—

'the wider version' to you . . . to the Quai!"

"Quite so, quite so," affirmed the civilian. Then, after further meditation: "It is a difficult period, the next six months. After that we should know definitely. But between now and the autumn? Perhaps the situation might be aided if we could send down some new and dependable agent, well camouflaged. Somebody with intuition who could move about in the right talkative circles and give us a fresh reading, fresh corroboration."

"Well," interjected Maistre, grinning broadly, "Arlette is just heading for Spain. Why not try her? The great, clever, man-killing Arlette!"

Grinning too, de Fontenelle waved the idea on one side. "Yes, I saw it this morning. A month's engagement in Madrid. But women . . . what are the use of women as agents? I'm fed up with them! For one who is of a little service, ten let you down. No, my dear Maistre, I know all about feminine intuition and sex lure, but I distrust them for several reasons. They won't take the necessary pains. Few of them can hold off talking. They exaggerate their reports. And they are fundamentally—or sentimentally—unreliable."

"Perfectly," agreed the soldier; "only I hardly think that quite comprises Arlette."

"Tiens, mon Colonel!"

"You see," went on the other, "she's arrived

right at the tip-top already—no need for her to want to shine in a branch different to her own. Also, she's as sharp and clear-headed as they make them. And there's no risk of any sentimental trash so long as she still has the big yearning for her lost Lucien."

"Taken in the first week, wasn't he? Still—I'm not in favour."

"But you don't object if I take her on?"

"How could I, Maistre?"

"Good."

The soldier rose. "This is what I have a mind to do. I shall meet her at a mutual friend's—at Gilvain's, of the Comédie—and I shall say to her: 'Mademoiselle, you would like to try and help France a teeny bit in Madrid? Good. Then keep your ears open for any *dependable* talk of Spain trying a coup in Morocco. You are a woman of the world. You will know when people are trying to hoodwink you. But, mind, you are not a spy. Get that right out of your pretty head. You have nothing whatever to do with me or with anybody in charge here. If anything happens to you we shall not lift a finger. You are entirely on your own. Devise your own methods, if these be needed. I do not say you could report much of value—probably very vague and fragmentary. Nor would you get any reward or recognition for what you did report. Nor should I want to hear from you again until you

returned to Paris. Is that correct, Made-moiselle? Good . . . Your hand—permit me.' That is how I have it in mind to address her."

"Sounds innocuous enough," semi-assented de Fontenelle with a good-humoured shrug, "only, do not let's start a French spy scare down there. That would put us right back."

Arlette, pulsating essence of daring and chic, was the very tonic of which the cut-off, sluggish, and moneyed Madrilians stood in need. How, in a land where all men talked and thought Woman incessantly—how Madrid loved a really first-class French artiste of the theatre, fresh as the flowers of the Halles . . . such a one as Arlette, the ravishingly undressed, high-kicking chanteuse, almost emitting sparks of *joie de vivre* in the direction of the sluggish ones, and firing their southern appetites no less! What a notion, too, to appear dressed as a doll, with big blue eyes and golden curls and a wide pink sash and little white socks! How delicious Arlette looked like that as she sang her star number of the day, "The Broken Doll." Sometimes, at the Alcazar, it would be two in the morning before she had given the last of her encores, and then, as likely as not, she would be half dragged, weighed down with bouquets, to a richly-laden supper board, there to parry the rusé advances of neutral noctambulists, young and old.

"Give us 'Madelon!' Give us 'Madelon!'" the gilded ones had clamoured upon one occasion. "Never mind if there are Germans about!"

But to this, Arlette had replied with commendable tact. "I have not come to Spain to do propaganda," she ruled; and there were cries of "Bravo, bravo!"

Usually Arlette lay well into the afternoon and lunched about four o'clock. Why not? Madrid appeared to have no fixed hours for anything. How different it all was from War Paris and London. What fools such people would be to go to war!

Towards evening, Arlette loved to roam abroad, along the Gran Via and down the Calle Mayor, taking in the kaleidoscopic play of the scene; on which occasions, to escape notice, she would artfully deck herself out to look like a smart lady's maid in a simple and trim black tailor-made. That had been an old dodge of hers in Paris, and had led to no little gossip regarding her true intentions. Yet how could she see the real Madrid from a spanking horse equipage such as was daily offered her?

Reared in the Faubourg du Temple, a real "gamine de Paris," Arlette loved to absorb a city from its pavements, herself one of the circulating potpourri. What fun Madrid was, taken like that! Never had she seen such funny types of men—apparently having their shoes shined

all day long while they sipped café-crème and smoked ceaseless cigarettes. Not a bit excitable though, as she had heard. On the contrary, they seemed singularly placid and good-natured. In fact, Madrid struck her as much more easy-going and democratic than republican Paris. And what a funny idea it was having lackeys serving drinks on the pavement outside all the swagger clubs—she had taken a chair outside the Madrid Club, thinking it was a café! And the politeness on all sides . . . even the lucky young Caballeros who could still ogle and flirt on the Puerto del Sol without fear of the morrow, even they managed to infuse charm into their “Buena noche, señorita”—although, upon such occasions, the palpable French maid would be interested in other things . . . in the gorgeous police, of which there seemed to be at least a dozen makes; in the competition of donkeys versus Hispanos for kingdom-of-the-road; in the superstitious offerings of limbless beggars, the most common of which was a beetle on a piece of cabbage-leaf in a tiny birdcage.

For perhaps half of her vaudeville engagement, and comporting herself with the greatest circumspection, Arlette studied the terrain, noted who was who and in relation to whom, and listened to what people, great and small, were saying. Whenever the War came up as a topic, as it frequently did at parties attended by quite

important guests, she would shun it with an "Oh, do let's talk about something else for a change—that's chiefly why I came here!"

Once, a young German military attaché, a gay spark with a highly singular mission attributed to him, sought to draw Arlette, having previously announced it to be his conviction that she was a spy.

"Monsieur," crushed Arlette, "I should not be inclined to talk to you ever, on any topic, the War last of all!"

Of Spanish "affairs," none was known. No lack of passionate señors in attendance, but nothing more. In fact, it presently came to be tittered about that the person Arlette was interested in was the lovely, dark Lola Cortez! And that the lovely, dark Lola was coming, in turn, under the spell of the "Broken Doll."

What mutual foils, what a glorious physical contrast they provided together! The one provocatively pretty and scintillating in a northern way, the other sensuously classical of type, purringly passive of the South. Madrid night circles sighed . . . and tittered.

Meanwhile the two stars became inseparable companions in a broken Latin lingua franca.

"You must come to Paris when it is all over, Lola chérie," Arlette would plan, relaxing gorgeously by the patio fountain of her friend's sixteenth-century hotel. "I shall see that you make a triumphant entry."

"Si, si."

And Lola would set to weaving visions of that super-moment in every artiste's career—a Paris triumph, and incidentally would fall more and more under the influence of Arlette.

Thus the friendship ripened, guided this way and that by the one-time gamine, until confidences of all kinds came to be exchanged—especially about men.

"Men," said Arlette, "may not be nice always, but they are necessary, and the more important the more necessary. Yours is very important, is it not so?"

Lola nodded; then automatically harked gradually back to her first love, a Seville matador. To which Arlette countered with an apache-like tale of the outer boulevards.

"I have always had my amante du cœur," she enlarged. "I have one now . . . only . . . it's terrible, Lola, he's a prisoner of war. Wait, I get you his picture."

This showed, in a silver frame, a French private soldier in the old képi, caught-up blue overcoat, and red baggy trousers.

"He was taken in the first battle in Lorraine," explained a woman in love. "For eight months he has been at Holtzminden, nearly starving!"

Lola, whose mind worked slowly, held the picture before her.

"He was my partner," the Frenchwoman's voice over her shoulder completed.

"But, Arlette!"—the Spanish girl rose excitedly—"supposing we could get him back for you—to Switzerland anyway! You know that Spain has charge of all exchange of prisoners. I will see . . . I will see Santos this very night!"

For the fraction of a second a visitor to that room might have detected a really gamine glint in Parisian eyes. Then everything was lost in huggings and kissings.

"Oh, this is famous! True romance! 'The great Arlette prefers common soldiers to Spanish grandees!'"

Thus the jocund mockings of the personage called Santos, after his señorita had told him about Arlette's man and begged his intercession.

"Still," he went on, "if that is all she is here for—and there have been other versions—we may be able to help her. Have you this fellow's name? And his place of detention? Good. Please. And now, Lola, for heaven's sake put this Frenchwoman out of your head for a second. She has occupied far too much of your time."

Soon the strictly personal reason lying behind the French star's descent upon Madrid in war-time was fairly common property, winning sympathy and dispelling rumours afloat. Yet, buoyed up by hope as she was in her private affairs, somehow, as the days slipped by, Arlette seemed to fall into gloomy fits of depression

over the War in general. She did this mostly in her intimacy with Lola, but also among certain others—how it was going ill for the Allies and might soon fare worse. Her anxieties and doubtings she now no longer kept to herself, but carefully tacked these on to the conversation whenever a cue offered itself under secure and promising conditions. Supposing the Spaniards marched into Biarritz? Or Casablanca? Wild ideas pour rire? Perhaps not so certainly! There was talk of it in Paris. Whereupon would ensue exchanges of inside knowledge. Some of the talk would be futile, but not all of it.

With Lola, of the important protector, the going would be easier, since Lola was for ever castle-building around a future Paris triumph.

"Oh, don't let's talk of Paris," Arlette would burst out, "it makes me so sad. Perhaps—who knows—there will be no Paris for you to appear in after it's all over!"

One evening, with a fresh German victory in the paper, Arlette added to the refrain.

"Why aren't you with us," she turned on a surprised Lola, "instead of neutral, and perhaps to-morrow fighting for the Boches? How can one trust anybody?"

"But it is impossible!" spoke an incredulous Spanish girl. "The Allies will win and we are your friends. All that I hear tells me that. And I hear much . . . much of decisions this way

and that . . . much of which I cannot understand much!"

And Lola laughed. And so did Arlette.

Nevertheless, more and more, did Arlette require to be comforted afresh, seeming to hanker after ever firmer assurance of Spain's goodwill.

"I know I am becoming morbid about it," she would confess, "but, Lola, chérie, you do not know what it is to lose your country, everybody, everything . . ."

Nor did good news about Lucien come through as rapidly as expected.

In fact, one day just before her farewell, Arlette had one of her bluest "France fits" on—one that drained Lola of the last dregs of comfort she could summon into speech.

"Why, Arlette, only last night, when I said what you told me—that perhaps no Spanish girl would be welcome in Paris after the War—Santos laughed and laughed, and said what a wonderful imagination you had, but that I was to let you go on thinking like that, as if Spain might possibly fight France . . ."

"He did?" interposed a queerly alert voice.

"Yes, and he lectured me, too. Said that these things did not concern vaudeville stars, however illustrious, but I insisted that it was only on account of my Paris entry that I wished to know. That amused him. We were well late for dinner—it was nearly eleven—and he wanted no more of the comedy, as he called it,

but I got it out of him that I *shall* make my Paris entry, that Spanish girls *will* be welcome in France after the War!"

"You did?" The same alert note.

"Yes. He said that perhaps a week ago he could not have been so definite, but that certain things had been decided since."

"*You darling!*" Arlette hugged. And she really meant it.

The farewell supper to Arlette was a huge success. The "Broken Doll" was presented with a lovely diamond pendant. But the clou of the occasion came at the end in the form of an ordinary envelope, the brief contents of which caused Arlette, flushed and overjoyed, to mount a chair and cry, "Vive España!"

Her lover was to be released from his captivity in Germany and was to be sent to Switzerland!

"Shall we order a special for Berne?" twitted a wag.

"If it goes by Paris—yes," laughed back Arlette. "I must be there first—to see my couturier!"

Subsequent expert opinion in Paris—not at Arlette's couturier, but at a meeting with Colonel Maistre again in the apartment of Monsieur Gilvain of the Comédie—was that the famous vaudeville star had played her cards well. Moreover, that which she had to relate

was circumstantially sound and fitted in with current reports from other quarters.

"And what are you going to do for us next, Mademoiselle?" enquired Maistre, glancing slyly across at a de Fontenelle somewhat out of countenance.

"I travel in Switzerland." Arlette struck an attitude of bliss, hand on hip, head uptilted.

"But the very place for a special mission!" the soldier punched fist to palm.

Imperceptibly Arlette considered. Then roguishly:

"But, yes, my Colonel . . . even a mission very special!" And lightly was gone.

SANCTUARY ISLET

“It is entirely insupportable that the present state of affairs shall continue!”

So deciding, the German officer in charge of the Tournhout-Tilburg section of the guard on the Dutch frontier dismissed the latest sentries to report unaccountable rudeness, amounting to open enmity, from the inhabitants of Baarle-Duc, a village lying just across in neutral Holland.

Antwerp had not long fallen, and the German army of occupation was still busily engaged in sealing up the Belgo-Dutch frontier along the whole length of which were posted guards with orders to let no further refugees or others pass. For the most part the slow-witted Dutch peasantry watched the proceedings with a benevolently neutral eye—after all, the Germans were the conquerors and German was quite like Dutch and, anyway, there had never been much local love lost for the Belgians. Yet for some unknown reason, unlike the friendly-disposed folk of other Dutch frontier villages, the Baarle-Duc people seemed to go out of their way to scoff at and deride and insult the German sentries whose pacings to and fro took them

almost to the top of the main—and only—street of the village.

The children would gather round, pull long noses, and then scamper for safety. The men would make the most objectionable signs. Even the women stuck out their tongues and, when winked at, spat. And such grave discourtesies the Germans could not understand at all. Was not Baarle-Duc a prosperous little Dutch village like all the rest? Were not these folk good, solid Hollanders thrice blessed in their slumbering, neutral bliss? Then why this hostility? From Belgians—yes, everything could be understood. But why from these Dutch?

That was now what an irate German officer put in writing to the Kommandantur at Antwerp at the conclusion of a detailed report of the abominable misbehaviour.

The Kommandant was naturally furious. It was a time when Germans could be. Absolute respect for the German uniform must be exacted from these verdammte Dutch cheeses! With passion, the Kommandant wrote so to his Embassy at The Hague.

The reply he received was in the way of being a stunner. Regret was expressed that the General-Kommandant should be unaware of the status of Baarle-Duc. By failure to agree at the Congress of 1839, this village had been left as a Belgian enclave surrounded by Holland. Its

citizens to-day were therefore hostile Belgians, with whom Germany was at war. So could their attitude be considered surprising? "This Allied islet in our rear—and which we can't touch without violating Dutch neutrality—is therefore commended to your special attention," ventured the informant, in closing.

The night was pitch dark, the rain came in gusts. But for the periodical squelch of a sentry and the regular flash of a searchlight on to barbed wire (it was now 1915), nothing stirred the watch on the Dutch frontier.

On his belly, a man in tattered khaki and civilian overcoat crept up to the wire. He had been told exactly how the live circuit ran—the one that electrocuted at the slightest touch.

"That's it!" he trembled. "Christ, now for it!"

And he set gingerly to work with wire-cutters and rubber gloves, avoiding the wire of death at infinite pains. The searchlight came and went. Under its fleeting beam the escaping Territorial lay each time inert. Then he recommenced picking and cutting and twisting. Others could bribe the guard with many thousand francs and get through, perhaps even have the luck to subscribe to a "Cook's Tour party" at the rate of twelve thousand francs for twelve, but this lone struggler had to rely on himself—he had even had the ill-luck just to miss by a day the

momentary cutting off of the current by a German engineer who reaped a golden harvest from the brilliant notion. That had been for three pals, moreover.

But as he wrenched and snicked and laid low, that stormy night at the frontier wire, our Territorial was too intent on his job to give thought to such matters. The thing had to be done against time. Just sufficient aperture for him to crawl through—that was all that was necessary, and fortunately at this early stage the wire was not at all thick. Some preferred ladders, others, burrowings. He preferred the wire, having been through a course.

. . . At last, after more than an hour's furtive work, sufficient opening was made and the escaping one wriggled through, tearing his clothes freely while doing so.

But how it was worth it!

Holland!

The midnight marauder could not resist standing upright at the thought and drawing in a first breath of freedom. For two months he had lived under the incessant shadow of death. Now here was life! But no (he swiftly reflected), not yet. Here might be life all right, but here also was internment for the duration if caught! Neutral Holland was all very well, but it wasn't the place he was aiming for. "Only a few hundred yards half-left," he remembered. "That must be it over there—those lights."

◆

Around Baarle-Duc the Dutch kept a few sentries and customs officials, but the fugitive had little difficulty in dodging the somnolent couple who came within his purview that wretched night, and presently he was safe on Allied territory, knocking at the door which had been described to him in the main street. Not that there could be much doubt about it, for underneath "Hôtel des Alliés" some prior visitor had scrawled "Sanctuary Islet."

"Un Anglais de Miss Cavell," hesitated the tardy caller as the door was opened to reveal an ample madame.

"Not necessary to tell me. How she works, that woman in Brussels! Enter! Enter! You must be exhausted, poor fellow!"

By early 1915 the immune Belgian enclave had become a recognised rallying centre for escaping French, British, and Belgians—a place where these could always be assured of a "breather" on their precarious odysseys. Indeed, the 400 odd inhabitants of the village were doing quite a fair trade out of their transient fugitives. Whether this made others jealous or not, it so fell out that the year was not far advanced before a campaign of pressure was begun on Baarle-Duc, whose menfolk, it was insisted, should proceed to London and there report for duty with the Belgian colours. To this summons, however, the lucky isolated

ones replied with a flat refusal. Enough, what they were already doing. And more useful. The war-time destiny of Baarle-Duc was cast.

"Perhaps it would be a mistake to get on the wrong side of them," suggested an Allied official to his Belgian opposite number. "You see, they could be so jolly useful in other ways besides this succouring of fugitives."

"For example?"

"Would there be any objection by your Government to our erecting a wireless station at Baarle-Duc?"

"For what purpose?"

"It could serve a dual rôle. You could pop some red-hot keep-your-pecker-up propaganda right into Belgium under the noses of the Germans (they'd love that), and we . . . well, we could find uses for a wireless set functioning from Baarle-Duc."

"I understand you," smiled the Belgian.

Presently there was much coming and going in Baarle-Duc. Excitement, too. Who were the foreign civilians who had arrived and taken up permanent quarters? Spies about to go into Belgium? Maybe. Even the Dutch guards woke up and peered down the main street of the Belgian enclave. Something afoot, evidently. The gossips, too, got hold of it. The Allies were going to build an aerodrome in the village. No! a wireless station. Yes, that was it—a wire-

less station! There was the mast already!

Soon transmission started. At first this was entirely Belgian propaganda, and very valuable it was for at that time hardly more than one Belgian listener-in—a priest with a concealed set near Roubaix—was managing to intercept even as much as the daily Allied communiqués. Now, of a sudden, the ether over occupied territory began almost to sizzle with news bulletins and exhortations calculated to cause Belgians, to a man, woman, and child, to fall in behind Cardinal Mercier in his heroic stand against the oppressor. Nor did it take the Germans long to pin down the offending station to Baarle-Duc. Their wireless direction-finders, employed to guide the Zeppelins, secured an unmistakable intersection on Baarle-Duc very soon indeed.

“But this is a disgrace!” complained the Germans to their benevolently neutral Dutch friends. “You allow our enemies to cart gear and stores across Holland into their cursed refuge? This is not being friendly. We are not afraid of you flooding your dykes. Be careful!”

Still, that was about all the Germans could say. After all, propaganda was not a crime. So, for action, the top-dogs of the day contented themselves with erecting a special intercepting set on the frontier plumb opposite the Allied transmitting post, which was clearly visible on the roof of the Hôtel des Alliés. And everything the latter station transmitted, the German

operators promptly intercepted. It continued, however, to be all blatant Allied propaganda, and in the upshot the Germans determined to smother the offending set out of existence by jamming; which caused them in due course to conclude that this impudent hamlet thorn in their posterior had been adequately dealt with.

Actually, Baarle-Duc was only beginning to be useful. Soon it was transmitting back to the Allies the more important excerpts (duly encoded) of agents' reports, on the occasions when these hardy souls braved the frontier wire and arrived in person at Baarle-Duc. But for this a longer wave-length and increased power had to be used, and eventually it became impossible to elude the German listeners.

On intercepting coded matter, the Germans at once pricked up their ears. Highly-skilled operators and a better installation were substituted at the frontier, and everything that came to be intercepted—chiefly a meaningless jumble of letter groups—was at once rushed to the decoding section at Grand Headquarters. Here, expert brains pored over the intercept sheets for days and nights together, until finally the key word stood revealed and it was possible to inform the Dutch Government that Baarle-Duc was now being used not only as a centre for wireless propaganda but—far more serious—for the transmission, in code, of Allied agents' re-

ports (enclosed was the proof). Moreover, these spies were clearly experiencing but the smallest difficulty in outwitting the Dutch sentries and getting into Baarle-Duc. The whole thing was a scorching scandal! For two pfennige the Germans would cross the intervening few hundred yards and put paid to Baarle-Duc's account once for all, and hang neutral Holland! Concretely, the instant cessation of all petrol supplies into the confounded enclave was peremptorily demanded, since these supplies were patently being used for a warlike purpose, to wit, to provide power for espionage transmission. This, at least, the Dutch could easily bring about if they chose to exert themselves!

Somewhat rattled this time, Holland agreed.

The Dutch guard about the tiny Belgian commune—so near the mailed fist and yet so far and safe from it—was trebled, also the number of customs searchers. As for the Germans, from vantage points on the frontier, specially-posted observers with field-glasses and even telescopes held Baarle-Duc under constant surveillance. All that went on in the village from dawn to dusk now formed the subject of a daily report to the Antwerp Kommandantur—notably such incidents as “the English operator came out after mittagessen and played football in the main street.” Nothing escaped the vigilance of the German checkers upon Dutch indolence—in fact, it became a joke in the islet sanctuary that

one could not kiss there any longer without the Kaiser knowing of it!

Nevertheless, the Dutch ban on petrol was a serious obstacle and one which had to be tackled, since without power the wireless station might as well be dismantled. Various stratagems were in turn tried for smuggling in the vital fuel, but they were all progressively discovered by the now alert Dutch officials, whose palms were being freely oiled with German marks. And so, as petrol stocks dwindled, transmission had to be gradually cut down to a minimum. Moreover, since it was now known that the Germans were all attention, Baarle-Duc had to be provided with a frequent change of code.

But the most pressing difficulty was the petrol.

In the grip of a keenness such as only wireless operators appear capable of, the marooned young operator of the Hôtel des Alliés racked his brains for some means to replenish his rapidly dwindling stock. Get an aeroplane to drop some? Out of the question—violation of Dutch neutrality. Under market produce, he had tried and tried to get the fateful juice smuggled in.

Great ideas come at odd moments. We have Newton and Watt as evidence of the fact. Now, as our wireless friend lazed one afternoon outside the only estaminet, vaguely watching the daily filing of Baarle-Duc's hausfraus past the

Customs on their return from the market-town without, he suddenly sat up and enunciated incomprehensibly: "*I've got it! They're all equally fat! No one will notice a thing!*"

"I'll try it on first with Madame," decided the young man, equally cryptically, as he headed for the hotel, keyed up with excitement.

"But you are at least mad, my young friend?" was the patronne's rejoinder to the proposition put her.

"Not a bit of it. You go across to Tilburg, get a couple of tins, and hitch them up under your skirts! Look! We will try first with empty tins. Here, take these two and fix them where they're least noticeable . . . where they'll fit in with the figure. I'll shut my eyes."

It was lucky that Madame was a good soul and liked to help. "You are daft," she repeated, "quite daft." But she hitched up the two petrol tins beneath billowing folds. "Voilà!" she announced, turning on her toes, arms akimbo. "Am I not comely? Always in Holland one admires the fat."

"Quite, quite," acquiesced her young pensionnaire. "But for heaven's sake don't pirouette like that passing the Customs! They clanked!"

"And now?" inquired Madame.

"Now I want you to shed those empties and go across to Tilburg and bring me back a couple

of full ones! It will be a test. If the Dutch notice nothing, you will draw up a list of the fattest and most dependable fraus in Baarle-Duc and we shall work out a special tariff—so many florins for each full tin they smuggle in. I'm sure it'll make no difference to their natural contours."

"Parbleu!" bristled Madame. "If they dare to examine under my skirts!"

Such was the stratagem which succeeded in giving Baarle-Duc a new lease of life in the Allied service.

Soon, a regular stream of hausfraus, with petrol tins concealed under their skirts, had been organized.

"Quite surely," decided a German officer, telescope-to-eye one morning, "there will shortly be a rise in the birth-rate in Baarle-Duc."

THE SIGNORINA WEAKENS

WHAT does it matter who the hero of this episode was (some mightn't call him a hero at all, but a "sad sir") . . . I mean what nationality he boasted? As a fact, I rather fancy he used to tread pretty lightly himself on this head owing to the possession of a string of names, but too clearly denoting mixed origin. One of these names, I do recall, was "Raoul"—so Raoul he shall be. Not, as I say, that it matters in the least. What matters, or rather mattered, was that Raoul was one of those who believed in women spies—not just dabbled in them, but, as you might say, swore by them.

He was also an intellectual. Chiefly, that was why he was where he was—holding the strings of espionage for a certain warring country, in a certain neutral land. Nor was he alone, as an intellectual, in this sphere. Other intellectuals, through social prestige, had also managed to gravitate to this particular branch of "I." For one thing, if one was a writer, *Contra Espionage* gave such a rare opportunity of getting along with one's own work in war-time. Was there not that priceless yarn of an intellectual-turned-"C.E." who, becoming so engrossed in his private work, was said to have allowed an enemy

submarine base to grow up almost under his window in classical climes?

Not that Raoul was in any sense a dud. Nevertheless, he was a bit of a dilettante. In the delectable city where he held sway, on good pay and expenses and answering only direct to his Government, Raoul had a reputation for taking things easily, for picking the plums that offered to his taste—especially the lady plums, upon whom he exercised a clear fascination. For, in addition to being an intellectual, Raoul was seductive of feature in a delicate, chiselled way the French would say he had “race.” But we must not forget that he believed in women spies. That is the main thing.

On the particular day this triviality opens—Autumn, 1917—Raoul was sitting, as usual, at the receipt of custom. Buying what he called “merchandise.” Not stuff in crates or bales, but information of the pettier, routine kind from unregistered spies working on their own, and constantly returning from the great, closed land that held all thoughts. Raoul prided himself on having no less than a hundred and twenty of these lesser agents on his books—though, truth to tell, the vast majority were engaged purely in making notes from enemy casualty lists, now no longer issued in the Press, but posted up at town halls because it had been discovered that their publication gave away valuable information bearing on the subject of reserves.

So in would troop this common-or-garden brand of agent to Raoul—sometimes six or seven in a day, returned commercial travellers and the like—to hand over their casualty list jottings against spot cash. “One error,” was Raoul’s fiat, “and I’m through with you.” As for the material, it would be dispatched to the Government concerned, in a curious manner, for “vetting.”

But if casualty espionage was straightforward enough, and formed the bulk of his work, Raoul had other fish to fry of a less simple kind. Such, for example, as the go-between. This species was not the spy himself but a shrewd bargainer acting on the latter’s behalf. Sometimes a go-between would hold out for money first, before he delivered himself of his information. Rarely, though, would Raoul agree to this. “Supposing you were selling a piano,” he would argue, “why should I buy it before testing it?” What he would occasionally agree to do, however, would be to pay over a quarter of the sum arranged, by anticipation, the balance to follow just as soon as his Government gave the O.K. on the material submitted, and not before.

So, roughly, the workings of Raoul’s job. In his less dilettante moments, how its principal loved to finger his files, turn over his list of agents, think out new stunts for this or that one . . . since Raoul always held to sending home,

if not the very best, at any rate the most arresting information that could be made available.

Just at present a good deal of the information required hinged on Italy, consequent on the opening up of vast new lines of communication down the length of that peninsula as part of the attempt to defeat the submarine. Indeed, that September day as he sat with his "merchandise," Raoul received coded instructions requesting him to investigate exactly what several suspicious characters were doing in certain Italian centres such as Rome, Naples, Taranto. Contra Espionage on the spot was also investigating, it was explained, but his parallel report was desired as a check. Could he arrange to detail a reliable agent without delay for the job on hand?

Could he not?

"The very thing, I imagine, for the bella signorina!" Raoul decided within a minute or so of decoding. But the bella signorina was just then on a job at Milan and had to be sent for. And the interval of waiting on her arrival was not fated to be too comfortable for Raoul owing to the insistence of an officious subordinate (who nevertheless had to be tactfully handled) that women spies were a complete wash-out. For the best part of two days the argument ebbed and flowed between the couple, the officious subordinate laying it down that female agents lacked patience, method, concentration, also the tech-

nical mind, and that they were inaccurate, apt to exaggerate from vanity, spectacular, and sentimentally wobbly. "I wouldn't trust one of them a yard," was the subordinate's view. And this Raoul wouldn't have at all, stressing, in racy elaboration, the great sex asset wielded by women spies. "Of course, though," he would qualify, "they've got to be sound workers—like the bella signorina."

Hot upon such argument that lady arrived. She happened to be Polish, but that did not stop her being known as the bella signorina for, in addition to looking the part and having lived under the protection of a Roman prince, she "had" Italian with the same fluency that she "had" her native tongue—and half-a-dozen other languages besides. "We Poles have to be linguists," she would laugh. "Our own language is so horrible that no one will speak it. Just think of it—to say 'love' one has to say 'kocham.' How can one expect nice men to whisper that?"

But the bella signorina had not often been in laughing mood lately. Had she taken another knock gambling? Or gone back to cocaine? As he studied her white, drawn features—but attractive, oh yes—Raoul pondered the point. Then he decided he'd give her double expenses this time and plunged into the delicate matter on hand.

"Don't look so sad," he began. "I've got a first-rate affair for you. *Beaucoup de galette*. Here are the names and descriptions of four men and where they are stopping, so far as we know. I want you to worm out of each one exactly what he is really doing in Italy at the present time. Of course they'll all say they're merchants or friendly tourists or something. But you know that rigmarole from experience . . ."

"Please, sir, do not insist on that."

Odd, thought Raoul. Odd look in her eyes. Still he continued:

"I shall warn our people in Rome that you're on your way, so that they can get an all clear for you from the Italians. You may be away some time. Here are six thousand lire and the same will be coming to you again if your stuff gets the O.K. Of course report verbally to me at the close, as usual."

The rest consisted of a measure of formal politeness, and the *bella signorina* was on her road once more.

"Can't quite fathom the look in her eyes these days," reflected Raoul as he closed the door. "Soulful and serious . . . didn't jump at things a bit."

In the Rome express the *bella signorina* studied the few bald details given her concerning the men she was to make love to. She also

looked out of the window quite a lot. And sighed now and again. What a position to be in! It had to be she—Gilda—to get into such a position! And with no apparent way out.

In the lounge of the Grand Corso Hotel, Rome, Raoul's investigatress selected a quiet moment in which to approach Tommi the bartender. "Anyone interesting?" she asked, while transferring a hundred lire in a handshake.

The barman bowed his thanks.

"Do you know an American named Lowell?" went on his interlocutress.

At mention of the name Tommi brought a finger to his lips. "Not so loud, Signorina! Over there in the corner!"

The bella signorina glanced across at a nasty, fat, shiny man, and gave an involuntary shudder.

"Champagne—lots of it," continued Tommi, unsolicited but primed in the game. "And pours it down officers' throats. The English drink most. They go up with him afterwards to séances in his suite."

"Looks the kind one needn't dangle for long," suggested an appraising cocotte. Then: "Thanks, Tommi. Au revoir!"

The following night was a difficult as well as a repulsive affair for Gilda. Mr. Lowell kindly

obliged, all right, by what he called "setting up" a tête-à-tête dinner in his rooms, and he got duly semi-incapacitated; but before the bella signorina could really get down to the business of the night and go through her host's "grips" and wallet while he lay in satiated torpor, she had to put up with a good two hours of sentimental domestic drooling about Mr. Lowell's wife and kiddies way back home, Mr. Lowell (in addition to bringing forth photographs) even reciting at one stage a piece of toper's self-pity commencing: "We only drink to forget."

Nevertheless the hard going was worth it, for in the stillness of the night searching fingers came upon this letter:

My dear Gross,

Of course if you feel like helping our friends while in Italy go to it, but I warn you it's a difficult business for amateurs. I doubt if I can be much assistance beyond suggesting that the matters most interesting our friends at the present stage in the field you are traversing are, broadly speaking, these: warship construction (rate of progress, innovations), transport sailings and protective developments, gunnery and mine-laying, disposition of Fleet, Allied naval compacts, morale and training, any chances of getting ship's ratings to blow up their vessels, target and torpedo tests, any new anti-submarine device, such as the decoy ship, signalling and

wireless codes, developments in smoke screens and camouflage, the coal shortage and oil substitutes, speed trials, seaplane building, ray control of mines. There's a fine bunch! Good luck, but go carefully.

Yrs., M. M.

To the accompaniment of snores, trembling fingers scribbled a copy and put back the original. Then Gilda tiptoed out and away to her own room.

If she could only stop now! she sighed, opposite the full-length mirror. Not to have to go on with these other three beasts! Should she pack and return right away to Raoul? How she would love to do that, to show him immediately what good work she had done for him! Perhaps he would understand and not send her any more of these kinds of missions. But no . . . he would only be annoyed.

So off journeyed a downcast signorina next morning to tackle number two on her list. Aged over seventy and an Armenian, he proved impervious, and after wasting four days Gilda had to admit defeat and pass on to number three, at Taranto.

But why continue the sorry litany? Obviously such a special job as the bella signorina's had its setbacks with its successes; obviously all the men she would be instructed to report intimately on were not equally the prey of pretty ladies—

though it must be said that an astonishing percentage were, in 1914-18, men who have since re-espoused perfect propriety. Enough, that Gilda landed two of her four on this particular round trip and that Raoul was so delighted with the Gross letter (which led to that neutral's immediate arrest) that he promptly packed the bella signorina off again on the road to report on a fresh trio of suspects. Nor did he give more than a passing thought to the look, almost of anguish, that came into the bella signorina's eyes as he did so.

What caused things to snap so suddenly after that? After all, Gilda was no schoolgirl—rather, a hardened cosmopolitan adventuress of five-and-twenty. Perhaps it may have been the futility of hoping that anyone should ever understand. At all events Polish temperament worked. A saying goes that a Polka is half punch, half holy water. Now the holy water won. Gilda decided that it was impossible in the special circumstances for her to offer herself to these men any longer. And the sequel was, inevitably, that she came back as good as empty-handed from her next round trip. She professed that her subjects had refused to talk about themselves, or that they were inaccessible, possessed no interesting papers.

But Raoul, being an intellectual and versed in the study of human character, demanded: "Are

you quite sure you went the stipulated length?"

To which came a faltering, "Y-e-ss."

"Then go back and try them again—also this additional one. And mind—I want results!" Raoul stressed that.

In her hotel room Gilda took a draught of veronal which brought a full cycle's oblivion. But when she awakened, there was the fearful problem confronting her just the same. The problem being that unless she continued getting results—and that there was but one way of getting these she knew all too bitterly—he would dismiss her from his service and she would never see him again at all. On the other hand, if she went on with the life she'd fallen into, continued to go out all the time like this at *his* word of command, she'd go mad . . . or her heart would burst. Better suicide than . . . well, there was the problem. How to keep him—or rather keep near him, working for him—without making the sacrifice that had now become so hideous to her?

After many heart-pullings, Gilda decided that there was only one way. It might fail, but it must be tried. More than once, in her recent anguish of mind, she had fallen back on the idea. Now she would put it into practice, at least as a trial. She would fake her next reports—not go after the men at all, but simulate as if she had.

Away she went for ten days to neighbouring Como, then at the height of its autumn glory, and there, at her leisure, she wrote out pages of pure imagination concerning the suspects she had been told to report on.

During initial days following her return to headquarters, Gilda inwardly thrilled to the belief that she had brought off the trick. For hours she sat reciting her faked reports to Raoul, who grew progressively elated as each fresh sign of the bella signorina having returned to her normal self, became apparent.

"You have done splendidly, splendidly, this time, Mademoiselle," was his final comment. "Here is a bonus—a fat bonus. Now run away and enjoy yourself for a week!"

How glad Gilda was to collect that praise! But run away and enjoy herself—how could she?

Rather did she spend the week's respite granted her in roaming the vicinity of Raoul's office. He usually got the O.K. from his Government inside of a week. Her reports had gone forward at once. She could not rest until that O.K. came through. Supposing . . .

Unhappily for her, what Gilda supposed might conceivably happen, did happen.

Inside of a week Raoul did hear from his

Government, but it was not the O.K. Decoded, the communication ran:

"Request immediate dismissal Venus Two, whose latest reports on Italy suspects all patently faked. Advise you go much more piano with women spies."

Raoul had named his principal feminine agents after feminine stars. Venus Two was Gilda, and dumbfounded, furious, Raoul sent for her.

What signifies it how he upbraided, almost stormed at her, before abruptly showing her the door?

What is interesting is that next morning the man who believed in women spies received this note from one of them:

"Good-bye, Raoul, I loved you."

And that somewhere in Central Europe to-day may be seen a grave which receives a solitary wreath once a year bearing the inscription (in Polish):

"She also served."

VIVANDIERE OF THE AIR

PERVENCHE was a slim danseuse of war-time Paris, born in Luxembourg. Although figures were still much the vogue of that curious day, Pervenche's slimness was a good deal of her fortune, since it enabled her to wear French uniform without the disastrous burstings of an Ethel Le Neve. And this donning of horizon-blue kit in turn enabled the great French ace to take her up over the German lines for the purpose of dropping her at a secluded spot, without running the risk of being shot—the pair of them—did ill-fortune necessitate a forced landing in enemy country. For such was the aerial code gradually evolved during the first air war: so long as these flyers on special missions and their passengers were properly attired in uniform and travelled no incriminating accessories, they must be treated, when taken, as ordinary prisoners, however suspect they might be. But should either party be found wearing as much as a civilian scarf, then both were eminently shootable. As for sex, nothing having been ruled one way or the other regarding the legality of women participating in events, in uniform, Pervenche was considered to have a sporting

chance in hers—an up-to-date vivandière of the skies (in case of trouble, officially an observer).

But just now Pervenche wasn't boisterously happy. "I am getting to be sick of these journeys," she complained to the young French officer detailed to keep touch with her. "After all, I am not French, and I risk my life, and you do not pay me enough. One thousand francs! What is that for half-a-week's nightmare?"

"Plus what you get from the Boche officers in Brussels, ma belle—don't forget that."

Pervenche coloured, rouge and all. "That doesn't concern you!" she flared up. But almost as quickly, upon eyeing her escort, she subsided. Il était si beau garçon! "You are not very gallant," came in lesser key. "It is well that I have the big yearning for you. Now what do you want of me?"

"To-morrow night. Same rendezvous as a month ago." The café waiter, who was doing some napkin twirling and listening, couldn't make very much of that, decided the speaker.

"Eh bien, *non!*" Pervenche delivered herself once Jean had moved on twirling elsewhere. "At that price I have had enough. Frozen to death, mal de l'air, days of nerves when one has to be the big actress. Non alors! A Bernhardt shouldn't be paid more. Besides, here when I am in Paris I feel I am being watched all the time. Suddenly in the

restaurant, on the boulevard, I feel eyes on me. Why? Why can I not be trusted? Have I not twice returned to your sacred aeroplane when I could have stopped on in Brussels? I am sick of being watched—*sick, sick, sick!*”

Delicate situation arisen, judged Pervenche's companion. Mustn't lose this girl. So precious few combined sharpness, looks, reliability, a taste for adventure, and German. Just getting nicely trained, too, was Pervenche. Dexterity, gallantry, now required.

“But listen, *mignonne*,” soothed a cajoling voice, “that is just the ordinary workings of our *contre espionage*. Anyone who does special missions like you has to be watched. Sometimes we find like that that they are consorting with suspicious characters. Besides, *chérie*, you exaggerate these hidden eyes. Believe me, there are not so many! Come, another *porto* and then we shall dine somewhere where the Allies are not, eh?”

“I shall want two thousand francs to-morrow.”

A gesture of the impossible.

“Fifteen hundred, then,” bargained Pervenche. But she was relenting. *Il était si beau garçon.*

The great aerodrome near Chalons lay with lights dimmed beneath a fleecy “bombing” sky. In hangars and in the open engines roared as

pilots prepared for night reconnaissance and raids.

The ace of special missions behind the lines supervised his mechanics as they tested the engine and controls of his record-breaking "Parapluie." "Another sacred chicken to take up to-night," he groused, pulling at his moustache. "I prefer men—one can throw them overboard. Besides, chickens get hysterical."

"You are right, my lieutenant."

Meanwhile in an adjacent hut three French officers and the "chicken" were assembled over a map, by depressing oil-lamp.

"You are pretty in your flying kit to-night," flattered the Major, who controlled these special flights on the General Staff side.

"And already blue with cold," shivered Pervenche, making as if to hug the sluggish stove.

"A hot grog," ordered the Squadron Commander. The third officer present, he late of Paris, set to restoring circulation to Pervenche's hands.

"Well, Mademoiselle," presently resumed the Major (who, for safety sake, never dealt in essentials until the ultimate minute), "time is flying. So should you be. It is now past midnight. Your mission this time is perfectly straightforward. You will be landed at about three this morning seven kilometres from Namur. You know where. Here are your

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identity papers for the occasion. You are an Alsatian, that is all that is different. Visit Namur, Brussels, Liège, and note every regimental number you can. Get officers to talk about the offensive. You must be back with your information at the spot where you shall be dropped exactly three days—seventy-two hours—later, that is, 3 a.m. on Tuesday morning next.”

“I want two thousand francs, and I want it now,” Pervenche returned to the fray.

The Major looked quite annoyed. “But what are these manners, Mademoiselle?”

“My price has gone up.”

“And how much longer must I wait, sacred name of a dog?” demanded the ace of special missions, suddenly barging in (he could make these intrusions). Through the open door the wings of a throbbing monoplane were discernible.

“At once,” calmed the Squadron Commander. “Don’t get excited.”

The two other officers, of the special branch, had withdrawn to one end of the long, bleak hut. The younger one was relating events of the previous night.

“But this is a hold-up—a vulgar hold-up!” characterised his senior.

“What can you expect, Major? From a little woman?”

“Yes, and the devil of it is the wench knows

so much! Better one working from patriotism than a hundred from lucre. Still—we must have these regimental numbers. They've fairly lost touch with things once again at Grand Quartier. Impossible, either, to get anybody else in time now. Must send her. But this'll be her last mission—don't like being black-mailed. When she comes back we'll evacuate her out of harm's way to the Pyrenees. Come. Have you two mille notes? Then give them her!"

Night flying on special duty had a technique all its own. Only the most expert and nerve-proof pilots could tackle it at all. One had to be a soloist. One's air sense of direction had to be prodigious. One had to possess infinite resource and quickness of wit. Such things as the Gosport landing had to be mere child's play—since an inspired touch for making the most perilous landings and take-offs in obscurity on rough surfaces was half the business. A good deal of the remaining half was an aptitude for playing hare and hounds thousands of feet up—zig-zagging in this and that direction in order to shake off possible pursuers and avoid ground observation, secrecy being, naturally, a first essential of such flying. Early on—until well into 1916—special missions were carried out nearly always by day, pilots usually taking advantage of early morning to land their passengers

on the borders of a wood, but later it was found possible to fly under cover of night. In this manner hostile ground patrols of police and cavalry could be circumvented—although a dread risk to the end was the peril of landing on a nice, smooth-looking piece of greenery which had been treacherously criss-crossed with wire to upset any marauding machine. But to proceed with Pervenche and the ace of special missions . . .

It came about that summer's night that instead of flying direct the 200 kilometres dividing Chalons from Namur, Pervenche's pilot approached the latter place in a wide semi-circular sweep, taking him as far west as St. Quentin and Valenciennes. Three hours' flying instead of one. But the enemy put off the scent. The aerial marauder, moreover, now displayed German lighting—another little inconvenience laying him open to attack from his own comrades. But on special missions difficulties crowded upon difficulties. Perhaps the most delicate matter of all was the infernal noise of the engine, even at ten thousand, as the monoplane drew near its rendezvous point. The French ace was well aware that even then its drone was being picked up by German microphones below; that with these new instruments the enemy was getting a sound intersection indicating the secret aeroplane's whereabouts aloft. Well, he would take rather a bigger risk

than usual and volplane down right away, cut off his engine now, and chance picking up the light signal from the cottage chimney near the crossroads. The cottage of old Father Lebrun of the foaming beer.

Down, down, down.

Barely a thousand feet up now.

If that light wasn't visible soon . . . *ah!* Flicker, flick, flick—there it was.

Then the landing. Of course, one had to switch the engine on and off as one sought the least dangerous spot. Meanwhile, those microphones. . . .

Bump. Jolt. Renewed roaring of the engine. Re-bump. The monoplane came to earth and taxied across a field almost into a hedge.

"Quick, quick!" old father Lebrun was calling as he ran towards two dim figures beating their arms for circulation, "there is a special watch . . . many more listening things in the woods and fields!"

A sharp, historical oath escaped the ace of special missions. But he pulled on his leather helmet again. "Help me to turn her round, then," he said.

Then, from the cockpit: "Until Thursday, la belle."

The subsequent twelve hours was an anxious period at the Lebrun farmstead. The aeroplane had made even more noise in departing than in

landing—several vain efforts to rise in the confined, muddy space—and the stout old Belgian farmer was not surprised to learn first thing in the morning that the Germans had put a cordon round the vicinity and were beating the countryside and carrying out a house-to-house search for the agent they were certain had been landed locally.

Soon the searchers would reach the field at the crossroads that had served as aerodrome. That was what chiefly exercised old Lebrun. He had no fear of one or two scattered neighbours turning informers. Nor was he specially alarmed concerning Pervenche—an intelligent girl who was carrying on as an extra farm hand until the scare should die down, her uniform adequately secreted away. But the tell-tale imprint of the monoplane's wheels across that field! From earliest dawn the Lebrun household laboured to obliterate the traces. If the German beaters came early it would be all up. . . .

Luck, however, decreed that the searchers should not sweep that way till past midday, when they were getting both bored and hungry. And then they noticed nothing except the new girl-help, whose papers were in order and whose glance promised well for the future.

The Lebrun household breathed once more.

"It will now be safe to drive you presently to Namur," arranged old Lebrun with Pervenche. "You will find all your pretty things for the

city up where you left them in the armoire. In an hour's time you will be ready, eh?"

In Brussels that same night the "Alsatian" newcomer—now become Suzy—entered zestfully into the crude champagning and love-making of German leave. She had her haunts from previous experience, and once or twice she interrupted pressing personal matters to go out and saunter in the streets, noting the numbers on shoulder-straps and jotting them down in dark places. Yet the risk of these cursed figures!

Gradually an idea germinated in her mind: *Why go back?* Why run further dire risk for people who intended sending her to the Pyrenees for her pains? The Major's rash words in the hut at Chalons kept drumming through her head. True, there was the "Parapluie" to think of. It would be back for her in forty-eight hours now. Well, couldn't it just go off again without her? Here in Brussels she had the equivalent of sixteen hundred good golden marks—and there were many more to be had for a song. Besides, wasn't she of Luxemburg, as much German as French . . . almost? Anyway, the French were too cut-and-dried about things for her liking, never overlooked her métier. Yes, that was what really rankled—stinginess apart. She did all this for them, and then when she fairly had to drag more francs

out of them they treated her as a cocotte extorting blood money!

"Pourquoi?" asked Pervenche of herself.

And again: "Warum?" (asked Suzy).

That is really all that is definitely known of Pervenche to this day; rather, to be strictly accurate, all that can be confidently surmised from this cryptic post-card:

"I prefer Brussels to the Pyrenees,"

which later came addressed to a si beau garçon who took some time to pierce it.

Suzy may have met in the ensuing two days and nights some German officer more dashing than the rest, and that may have clinched things. Who knows? Who cares now? Enough that she didn't turn up at the return rendezvous.

Once again the ace of special missions went over in search of her—the second time, according to understood procedure, forty-eight hours after the first. That second time! Until the day of his death, two years later, the great flyer was wont in reminiscence to curse the missing danseuse ("sacred little cow" was what he actually called her). Until the last possible minute, and with Germans positively hovering for him above, he had waited on old Lebrun's field . . . waited so long, as events fell out, that he had to fight his way practically the whole

distance back to the French lines, chased by a trio of pursuit Fokkers.

"Never again, women—I have supped!" was the virtuoso's decision after this second return.

There only remains to be mentioned that the Major, who had so rashly mentioned the Pyrenees, and who chanced to be standing by as these words were uttered, turned the feminine generalisation over in his mind for some moments, and then observed: "But, after all, mon ami, we must not condemn this confounded Pervenche too strongly. If she let us down, at least she did not give you away to the Boches. She might easily have done so for money, and then they would have been there all waiting for you on old Lebrun's field!"

But the ace of special missions, being in no lenient mood, only answered with the national expletive.

THE TRIUMPH OF ITOC

FOR over a year the listening set of the trenches had fallen into disrepute. Its sphere of usefulness looked to have reached a term. "Killed by its own magic" was the common verdict, it being even the fashion to contemplate the thing with a disfavour amounting to rooted objection. After all, what had it done in the main save act as a censor upon our own conversation in the line, by overhearing everything said and bringing a severe strafe down upon those who said anything of consequence which the *German* listening sets opposite might pick up? But perhaps I rush my fences, so to speak; perhaps ten years, and such years, have effaced from the memories of many just what the listening set was and what purposes it served in that smothered brain war-within-a-war governed so long by the word "Intelligence."

The listening set of the trenches was a very important contrivance when it made its first practical appearance in the B.E.F. at the commencement of 1916. So hush-hush was it considered that the official designation of It, immediately recast in Army-ese as Iroc, was bestowed upon the new gadget from which nothing less was expected than that we should

in future be in a position freely and continuously to overhear enemy conversation in the trenches opposite. No longer would it be necessary to send out intelligence officers into No Man's Land groping about on their tummies in the hope of picking up this or that scrap of German front-line chatter. Instead, trained young men of the clerical breed, experts in dialectical German, would sit over a box-like affair in a soundproof, forward dug-out, and listen through earpieces and note down at their ease what the enemy said in the sector directly opposite. Electrical "leads," laid out across No Man's Land and secreted close to the German wire, would render this possible.

Nor was the above vision, like so many Army forecasts, mere inventor's or inceptor's enthusiasm. Within a very short while Iroc *was* functioning as per invoice. Its success varied a great deal up and down the line—according to the nature of the soil, the lie of the land, the human listening element, the absence or frequency of shell-fire, and so on—but, generally speaking, by Easter, 1916, the deed was being done. Daily "listening sheets" were pouring in upon intelligence officers, whose latest job it now became to digest these further accretions to the paper war. One began to get a fresh and intimate picture of the hidden enemy opposite: what he was saying, doing, almost (at times) thinking. The mighty barrier that was No

Man's Land, the greatest "fireproof curtain" ever let down in history between one set of men and a second, was being pierced, comfortably, day after day.

Not that our adept eavesdroppers would weigh in, of an evening, with a verbatim report of Falkenhayn planning a coming push with the Duke of Württemberg. Or that Hans ever discussed such breathless stuff with Johann over the friendly soup-mug. Iroc was not jammed up against the Kaiser's Villa Neuville at Spa; by it, one contrived to overhear only such German conversation as extended back, say, five hundred yards from the front line.

The effect of this was that the talk (telephonic and other) mainly related to routine matters, with a rare sprinkling of remarks or exchanges of tactical concern, and never, never strategical in nature. Yet it was surprising how much of value one overheard concerning battalion and regimental sectors directly in front. A considerable amount of a listening report might be voluminous twaddle, having to do, perhaps, with the overnight amorous experience behind the lines of one German officer speaking to another. But then there might follow a sudden intercept indicating that such-and-such a battalion was to be relieved at midnight that night.

And what good would that serve? some may ask. Merely that the principal job was one of killing Germans, and that that midnight a

terrific barrage would be put down on the precise sector whose duckboards were at that moment, we knew, swarming with Fritzes starting off on their trek into rest, many of them certainly bound for leave after months of hell. Sad to kill them just then, but what would you? C'était la guerre.

Casting back, I see again before me a typical listening sheet of those days, made out in indelible pencil and with the hour and minute prefixed to each piece of German overheard:

April 10th.—Nothing all morning. Atmospherics bad, also our own fellows swear too much, blotting things out (can't this be seen to, sir?).

At 4.5 p.m. Major Braun, commanding, carried out inspection of Jerry front line. Hearing blurred, but he was dissatisfied and ordered out wiring parties to-night. Position not quite clear, but think about x.30.d.4.3.

From five to five-thirty artillery corrections given by telephone from German O.P. as per report attached.

Well, so the summary would run from day to day. The German original, as taken down verbatim by our interpreter-listeners, was naturally a much longer affair; but it all had to be combed through, lest behind some apparent triviality lurked a fact of importance. For the

most part, the record would consist of stray snatches of conversation, of singing, cursing, of orders over the telephone, of trench talk bearing on such details of the daily life of war as leave, rations, working parties, patrolling, casualties, dumps, discipline, training. With headpieces glued to their ears and pencils ever ready, our keen young interpreters would sit there for eight hours at a stretch striving to catch each syllable. Even the names of German officers could be of importance . . . as was memorably evidenced by an Allied officer once going over and impersonating a certain Hauptmann Schmidt and making a tour of inspection of the German front line. But that is another story. The point is that all through 1916, and for an early portion of 1917, Itoc was going strong. Then a really shattering piece of information came our way, transforming everything.

You may recollect that one late February day of 1917 the Germans surreptitiously withdrew, on the Somme, to the Hindenburg Line—and without as much as leaving a card on our G.H.Q. at Beauquesne. Not for several days after Fritz had begun to depart east from Thiépval, Bapaume and the rest, were we aware of the audacious decampment which had the effect, among other things, of rendering null and void such Nivelles-Haig offensive plans as had already been mapped out with reference to some

of the area which now lay denuded of the foe. But that is neither here nor there. What we are concerned with is the fact that the retreating enemy, by a serious oversight, left behind him at a certain headquarters a complete German Intelligence Summary treating with a day in the Battle of the Somme of the previous year.

Now, normally, such a find would have been hailed with unrestrained delight. But this one was gall—nothing but gall. For a supplement to the said summary set forth in full and incontrovertible detail how the enemy had been able, throughout the five months of Somme carnage, when we were bringing up fresh brigades and divisions almost daily with what we thought was a fair amount of secrecy, to identify not less than seventy per cent of all British units thus going into the line, immediately and unmistakably, by means of MORITZ. And MORITZ, we already long knew, was the German code equivalent to our own ITOC.

It was in no small measure due to MORITZ; to the excellent German listening personnel recruited from pre-war Coventry Street; and also to the wealth of rich British and overseas accents which were (literally) calling, day and night, to be overheard—Taffie, Haggis, Erse, Aussie, Canuck, Zomerzet, Aye-by-goom, not to mention Cockney, and then I haven't instanced half the variations that were well and truly deciphered via MORITZ—it was in no small

measure due to this sorry listening set circumstance that the Germans were able to block so effectively and tragically each fresh move of Sir Douglas Haig's.

Our lines remained an open book to them; *they knew what was coming—every time.*

Well, you can imagine approximately what supervened from this startling discovery. The enemy was obviously getting far more vital results from his MORITZ than we had ever got from our IROC. Therefore, the latter must henceforth be employed primarily as an instrument for policing the conversation of our own men so that if anyone transgressed the regulations, said something calculated to be of service to the enemy, he would at once be overheard by IROC and reported to headquarters. Our operators would still go on listening to the Germans, but their principal job would be to eavesdrop on our own men who would, incidentally, be solemnly lectured henceforward on "Things Not to Say in the Line."

The effect of such policing need hardly here be elaborated. In due course a distinct hush fell over our front trench system. Officers and men were even known, upon occasion, to converse almost in whispers, in the knowledge that a spy—that confounded IROC—was overhearing all they said. That hush, with its resultant rooted objection to IROC, endured for the balance of

1917 and well into decisive 1918. This was the dark period referred to at the outset—when ITOC fell upon evil days indeed after its opening glory. As for the Germans, detecting what had happened, they, too, proceeded to put a similar vast and strict hush down on their forward trenches; so much so that listening sheets, on either side, dwindled and dwindled.

HUSH!

The sky brightened extraordinarily, as by a miracle, in the summer of 1918, in France and Flanders. The Yanks were coming, and the Germans were cracking, but also *ideas* were thriving—pretty well for the first time on the Allied side. Two British soldiers who were all for ideas were Sir Henry Wilson and “Rawly.” Of the former, more elsewhere. Of the Fourth Army Commander—he who primarily led the culminating Battle of the Hundred Days, which was much more “British Army” than ever ex-Allies or ex-Associates have deigned to admit—of “Rawly,” who set the ball rolling on August 8th, before Amiens, which date (we have it from none other than Ludendorff) was “the German Army’s black day,” it is interesting to note that the thing was done, in part at least, by a skilful resurrection of ITOC.

To get the full flavour of this tale of “I,” one must appreciate that the whereabouts of certain major formations of the B.E.F. were

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ever a source of interest and concern to the German Staff, since the movement of such formations usually presaged "something doing." Thus, if the enemy suddenly identified the Guards Division at Vimy, it having come down from Ypres, the identification focussed immediate increased attention on the Vimy sector. It was so also with the Canadian Corps (I do not wish to draw invidious distinctions, but this has to be mentioned).

Now, it was proposed that Sir Arthur Currie's men should form the spear-head of the thrust of August 8th at Villers-Bretonneux. The Corps was already aligned there, and doubtless the enemy knew it. And was duly taking special dispositions to meet the Canadians, as was his wont.

Supposing the Germans could be brought to believe that the Canadian Corps was not in front of Amiens at all, but had been hastily moved to another part of the line? Might not the enemy, as a result, relax his vigil before Amiens, thereby adding to our chances of a breakthrough there?

"Rawly" and his staff debated the point. Then somebody came to them with an Idea—one that was realisable, and which could bring no harm to us, even if it failed. The suggestion was made that a representative trench-party of Canadians—accent and all—should be taken up to Ypres and there be put into the line and told

to hold forth directly opposite a point where it was known a German listening set existed. Moreover, the talk was to be of a special kind.

Better, though, to listen to a snatch of it as it came duly to be spoken some days later, according to plan, up in the north:

First Canuck: "Hell! As if we Canadians hadn't done enough down south! Carting us up here for another bloody attack at Wipers!"

Second Canuck: "About time the Imperials did something!"

For the best part of twenty-four hours such synthetic grouching was "staged" in front of the German listening set, whose operators must have thrilled to the gold-mine suddenly tumbled from the blue after long months of boring silence.

And not only did those Canadians use the spoken word up at Ypres, telephonic and man to man, but a complete battalion trench wireless installation, with special Canadian code and transmission methods, was located in their midst so that *that*, too, might be overheard, and the startling identification of the Canadian Corps at Ypres be definitely established in the minds of the German Staff.

A day or two later the Canadian Corps crashed through before Amiens.

UNSER VATER

THERE could not have been many less popular officers in Artois than the chief staff officer of X Division.

He was brave—almost theatrically so. But he was also big and bouncing and hearty, and on his visits to the trenches he was pleased to travel with a hound whose yapping, added to its master's devil-may-care exposure of his scarlet trappings and knack of creating commotion wherever he went, invariably had the effect of drawing German machine-gun fire and whizzbangs, and not infrequently Jack Johnsons . . . usually when the jolly, enjoying - the - war G.S.O.I. had passed on.

Also, the latter had a great and gory reputation for inspiring raids—those seemingly futile but costly incursions by night into the German front line to bag prisoners. Unlike Intelligence, however (which constantly required such “identification by contact” of the enemy for urgent reasons), the S.N. (Supreme Nuisance) of X Division looked on these raids as a cross between big-game hunting and keeping up the war-like spirit of the men.

“Don't want any more Christmas frattng, you know. Must keep 'em at it! Else this New

Army stuff'll be chucking brother Boche under the chin," he would apostrophise, oblivious of the fact that it was the old Regular Army that had gone out and played football in No Man's Land in 1914 in response to Saxon coaxing.

The S.N. had other ammunition up his sleeve, which he would keep for obstinate brigadiers and battalion C.O.'s who refused to see eye to eye with his raiding plans; and this was where he would be both a clever and a bad man.

He would draw on Intelligence lore, which was open to him, and seek both to justify his demands and put the breeze up his critics. In fact, he was just doing that at a battalion H.Q. in the line north of Arras on the day of early 'seventeen, with which this tale is concerned.

"We must have a live 'un or a dead 'un to-night," he was insisting. "You fellows don't understand the importance of this kind of thing. You'd sit here until the whole German Army mobilised in the sector opposite. Let me tell you a yarn—true one, no rotting. If we hadn't kept on the alert getting contact identification of Fritz in 1914, we'd have lost Wipers. It was a cavalry patrol—October 24th—that showed us, by capturing a brace of Hun cyclists, that four new corps were wheeling down on us. We didn't even know those quarter of a million Germans existed—much less that they were

about to attack. Well, they came down on us from Bruges under the Duke of Württemberg, and we held 'em, but we shouldn't have done so but for the four days' notice we got. *Supposing something like that's happening opposite now? How do you know it isn't?*"

Such an alarming piece of history seldom failed to impress, to do the trick. It was so again now, before Arras.

"Well," said the local brigadier to the battalion commander, who had been summoned, "if it's like that I suppose you'd better get ahead with arrangements for to-night."

To the S.N. he added: "This will be the sixth raid I've done since taking over this sector a month ago. Over fifty casualties. Practically no results. Impossible to get at him under present conditions."

But the S.N. was already picking up his belongings and hound, preparatory to departure. A glow of success was in his eyes. "You never know, General," he said. "Anyway, I'll see you have an intelligence officer right up forward to-night so that he can take on Fritz hot. *So make 'em bring back a live 'un!*"

Arrangements for that night's raid occupied the rest of the day. The sudden barrage on the selected spot, bombing parties, zero hour, method of approach, of mopping up in the German front line, and then of the swift re-

treat back across No Man's Land—if possible with a live 'un.

Going over maps and things with the company commander involved, the C.O. had an idea. The Germans were mining actively through the chalk soil out under the British position. But our listening parties down below had not been too successful the last day or two. Despite their delicate instruments, they had lost direction. It was gruesome to hear Jerry all day hammering and picking and not to know which point he was aiming at to blow up. Nothing cracked morale among front-line troops more conspicuously than this incessant, smothered, underground, enemy mining beneath them—like giant rats gnawing. A constant tension and state of nerves resulted, which even the officers had difficulty in concealing. At any moment they might all be blown sky high, to tumble to earth again so many mangled items. It had happened so often—and visibly—before.

And this Arras sector was the worst of the lot because of the easy chalk soil and the centuries-old underground passages which could, in part, be used. The Germans seemed to be everywhere, sawing, hammering in the bowels of the earth, whence muffled dynamiting would periodically rumble. Particularly our subterranean listeners reported their belief that an especially big mine was on the point of going up in the Roclincourt area. But exact direction had

been lost, and even the approximate point could not be designated. Consequently the battalion C.O. was in the dilemma of not being able to evacuate this or that trench or sap in anticipation. He had to keep all his men in line, knowing full well that a considerable number would have to be sacrificed when the German mine exploded.

But now he had an idea.

"To-night's raid will be carried out at Roclincourt," he announced, cancelling previous plans. "Perhaps if we get a live 'un he'll be a miner and can tell us where the wretched thing's going up! I don't mind helping the S.N. and the strategists, but to-night we'll try and help ourselves as well."

The raid was hardly a success. Ten went over and seven came back. Three of the survivors were wounded, and they and the four who were untouched were lucky. However, there was one compensation. They had brought back a Fritz. As they half carried, half dragged an inert shape across No Man's Land they had not any idea whether he was a live 'un or a dead 'un, but he was a Fritz. Most of the casualties had been caused by hanging on in order to get him up out of the German front line.

At the aid post the Intelligence officer allotted for the raid leant over the captured Field-grey.

He was a fair boy of perhaps eighteen, and he was covered in blood and mud.

"Abdomen blown in," diagnosed the battalion M.O. "May live half an hour, as he's young."

But, in complicated modern war, each man goes out after his own particular job. The Intelligence officer was hardly listening to the M.O. He was examining a German wallet drenched in blood. "By Jove!" he pronounced, holding his torch right down to the wet, red relic, "he's a miner! Belongs to a pioneer battalion. He'll know all about the mine going up!"

"Well, he won't know about it much longer," from the M.O. "What's the game? You're not going to try and examine a dying man?"

"Oh, yes he is"—a voice from behind, the C.O.'s—"if it means we can get any information that will stop fifty or more of our fellows being scuppered."

At the nearest C.C.S., in the cellars of Arras, a screen was drawn around the dying prisoner. Ashen and contorted in agony, the German boy kept moaning: "Mutter! Mutter!"

The examining officer passed several times from the cot to the telephone; then he would concentrate awhile on the captured Field-grey's papers, prior to returning once more inside the ominous screen.

Intelligence was functioning against time—against swiftly oncoming death.

Could the location of the mine that was going up be extracted from this poor form before it was too late? It was dreadful trying to outwit a dying youth, trying to make him say something he shouldn't, but certain entries in the young German's notebook rendered it beyond doubt that the mine was on the very brink of going up. *But where? Just at which precise spot?* Could the secret be wrenched from this cellar cot in time, so that the doomed area might be evacuated?

The Intelligence officer tried his hardest. Subterfuge was out of the question. But, enunciating his German slowly and clearly and leaning over to within a few inches of the moribund's ear, he put question after question in simplest language.

"Mutter! Mutter!" was all that came in response, in semi-consciousness.

"He's going out now—can't last another five minutes," advised the M.O.

"But, my God, if we could only get him to talk!"

"I can make him last a few minutes longer if it's really necessary. But he'll suffer hell."

Momentarily the examining officer hesitated. Was it all a nightmare? Was he really in an Arras cellar ruling that a fellow human being

should be made to continue suffering like hell?

"Battalion on the line again to Intelligence, sir," reported an orderly.

"Anything fresh?" inquired that unit. "We believe the thing's going up any moment. We thought of . . ."

Almost without answering, the Intelligence officer hung up the receiver and hurried back inside the screen. "Yes, give him it," he said to the M.O.; and turned away from the moaning boy.

The effect was immediate. The prisoner turned, breathed more deeply, and sighed "Besser."

"I'm not going to do that again," mentioned the M.O., "so look snappy."

"Tell me what to write to your mother," despairingly essayed Intelligence. "I have her address here."

"Am I going to die?" shivered the German youth, a look of terror creeping into his eyes.

"I will write that you died bravely."

The dying prisoner began to mumble in prayer: "Unser Vater . . ."

My God, but the time was slipping away!

"Better buck along," broke in the M.O. "He'll conk any second now."

The examining officer pounced upon the final flicker-up of the flame.

Unser Vater.

"I'm through," said Intelligence.

"About time," said the M.O.

The mine that went up early next morning was one of the worst in that sector.

ANGELE

ANGELE watched the German entry into Brussels while lolling in *négligée* at her window overlooking the Gare du Nord. She might have departed, like so many of her kind had done, to Ostend or Scheveningen, London or Paris, but she had chosen to stay. After all, she knew German and Germans well (had not a goodly proportion of her commerce been with them?); she was well installed and enjoying life here in Brussels; *she* had little to fear from an occupation—rather the reverse . . . hadn't she been for a day or two faintly repelling a bad, wicked notion that there might be adventure, nay, good business in it? So why should she have left?

One took life as it presented itself in her domain. She was Belgian, true enough—Luxembourg-Walloon—and, like everybody else these past three weeks, she had spoken red-hot words against the oncoming invader. But what more could she, a mere light-o'-love of twenty, accustomed to silken things and kisses, be expected to do? She decided that international wars were not her province. The night life of Brussels was.

So mused Angèle, that scorching August morning of 1914, as she watched the conquerors

park their wagons and limbers in the cobbled Place below, and the officers swagger across to the terrace of the Palace Hotel and shout for lager. Their spirits were tremendous, she thought. Where were the Allies? A lot of Brabançonne and Marseillaise and God Save—but no Allies! Not a uniform had they seen in Brussels, except Croix Rouge. Perhaps that was one reason why the streets were so full of onlookers. The good Burgomaster Max had exhorted them to follow the example of the Parisians in 1871, and shutter up and stay indoors, but Brussels had not done that. There they were, silent and fearful maybe, yet glued en masse to the parade. Some of the mounted Germans were even improving the occasion by blowing kisses.

Angèle decided to finish her toilet and go down. She would put on her best. Again: why not?

Not long after, she was being arrested for plucking a rosette in the Belgian colours from the rump of a German officer's horse. She had done it in passing and at a sudden prompting—after all, why such gratuitous insult to injury?—but the officer thus shorn of his posterior jape had ordered her to be taken into temporary headquarters in the Palace Hotel for affronting the German Army. Presently he followed himself.

"Well, my little lady, and do you know that I could have you shot for this to-day?"

But the conqueror hadn't really a shooting look in his eye. It was quite another look, and one which Angèle had small difficulty in recognising.

And so began the ascent of Mademoiselle Angèle—she was never known as anything else—in the German officers' lust world of occupied Brussels. Immune from air-raids the Belgian capital remained from the first winter to the end, and so it was the happy, lightning leave-ground for officers of the Fourth and Sixth German Armies who could run in there in an hour or two from billets and even dug-outs in the field; the enemy "Amiens"—only much more so. While Belgians were in the depths, the victors held high revelry on the Clausewitz principle of rubbing wounds with salt; and, indeed, if many Belgians faltered the wonder is that more did not do so, since very few but felt that the Germans were there in some shape or form for good and all. German onslaughts on all sides; the Allies seemingly incapacitated.

Fortunately for Belgium, however, she possessed in Cardinal Mercier, Monsieur de Max, and her outcast King, a trio of moral props such as have been vouchsafed few tormented nations, and to which came to be added later a fourth, if strictly material, pillar in Herbert Hoover. Without these four men, who shall

say what might have happened in occupied Belgium, where the conqueror's heel or a dearly bought immunity remained the eternal and nerve-racking alternatives for most citizens?

Angèle was of those who faltered. The whole thing went to her young head right away: the spirit of abandon, the excitement of "nothing matters," the fascinating maleness in uniform, the all-night champagne-to-music, the transient lovers passing to death, the marks being raked in, *the damned good time*.

Of all people, professionals of love have ever been those to batten most upon war; Angèle was merely running true to type. Indeed, she seemed cut out to soar—as many an imported German and Central European woman was bitterly to appreciate in competition with her.

Angèle had chic, looks, lure, vivacity, wit, and an unbounded resistance to excess—an equipment which rendered it unnecessary for her even to exert herself in holding her own. For the German officers liked Angèle, were "all for her." Apart from the added attraction derived from her being of the vanquished, she was very attractive in a piquant, dark way; but here let me interject the description of Angèle which figured on certain files of the Allies:

ANGELE. *Full name not known. Said to be consorting freely with German officers in Brussels. Agents going there should try to*

gain touch with her as she may be useful. Aged about twenty, medium height, slim, brunette, pretty and vivacious, eyes grey, nose retroussé, clear, unpainted skin. Always fashionably dressed, speaks German fluently, frequents Merry Grill.

That was an early-on description. Later the subject of this tale became much better known, but we are now dealing with 1914-15, when Angèle was still, so to speak, engaged in spade-work compared with what was to follow. Yet, even amid the wildest leave-orgies, when most around her lay amid cushions and bottles, Angèle retained a head on her young shoulders which was, no doubt, the real explanation of her success. Selective in her relations, she also had an eye for rank, and knew how to play up to Prussian vanity—a combination which sent her ever moving upwards through the military hierarchy, from major to colonel, colonel to general, and general to—well right up to the top.

There was a song which the German Army took with it everywhere:

*Püppchen, du bist mein Augenstern.
Püppchen, ich habe dich so gern!*

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It was the German "Madelon" of that early day, and what less odd than that this captivating Angèle—who had so singularly borne out Bismarck's dictum that courtesans were the only people who had no nationality—should be singing it on a table, champagne in hand one midnight in the Merry Grill, the cynosure of every upturned monocle? At any rate, there she was, and there also was his Excellency ogling with the best of them—the most hated man in Belgium, he who not long after was to add the Cavell affair to his record. The old fellow may have been approaching seventy, but with Angèle and others of her kind he could perk up enormously.

Angèle became his Excellency's favourite. Twenty-one and seventy. Rioting youth and flickering senility. For nearly two years the affair was to endure intermittently under the eyes of Brussels and the distant observation of the Allies. (Couldn't this renegade Belgian girl be "used"? Here, indeed, was a chance in a million! The things she must overhear; could get to know!)

As daily, monthly, the toll of oppression mounted, culminating in the razzias or wholesale deportations, how schemes were formulated in certain quarters to "use" Angèle—aye, even to the point of poison was she mentioned! But all this was reckoning without Mademoiselle Angèle. The maitresse-en-titre of his Excel-

lency, if she was ever even directly approached in the matter, had no inclination whatever to do away with her lord protector and benefactor. Life had become much too glorious for her for that. A car, a flat, fine clothes and jewellery (what matter if some of these were paid with *bons-de-guerre*?), a richly laden table while Belgians in general were starving but for Mr. Hoover, admiration galore — with all who wished to keep in his Excellency's good graces thrillingly beholden unto her — escorts here and escorts there, her own box at the Monnaie, and still the queen of night life whenever she willed. Naturally matters would be cloaked with a certain discretion, but the association was public property, causing Belgians alternately to boil over with indignation and to envy the lucky girl living so free of their own cares, fears, burdens.

Yet, if by no means a second *Boule de Suif*, Angèle was not altogether bad. While her fitfully enfevered old lover carried on his application of the mailed fist, she would sometimes occupy herself casually (perhaps for a few minutes of a morning) with her suffering kinsmen and kinswomen, come in their extremity to pray for her intercession that this or that permit or exemption or act of grace might be secured in their favour.

The difficulties under which Belgians laboured at this time were of too varied an order to be

adequately set down here. Their morale crushed, in desperate straits, people of good, even of noble family, would be driven to crave audience of Angèle in her exotic apartment, would be driven to implore favours of this girl of the cabarets who now had so omnipotent a protector. It was shameful to have recourse to such requests, to such prayers. But it was in Belgium, in 1916, the darkest hour of that country's suffering. It was war, at its grim worst, when normal rules of conduct went by the board. This girl could get things done. Then benefit by the fact, however disgraceful her situation! That a Belgian girl should have descended so low was terrible. Yet she was not the only one by any means—nay, she couldn't very well be blamed for the fact of her having been chosen for such sinister distinction. None the less, more than one of those morning beseechings of the enthroned courtesan were shot with tenseness. Supplicants required to exercise a self-control merging into histrionic ability lest their true feelings towards the renegade girl should gain the upper hand, and fondest hopes tumble in the dust consequent upon some outburst not to be suppressed. Did Angèle look closely on such occasions, she might well have detected a look of future revenge in the eyes of her visitors, especially in those of her feminine supplicants, a look of "wait till the Allies come back!" But to her there were no longer any Allies. For

Angèle, the Germans were now and for ever the masters of Brussels. So she just helped, or tried to, as and when the whim took her, and let it go at that. Also, it tickled her vanity to wheedle the old man now and again, particularly when he had contrived to make others shake in their shoes rather more than usual.

"A pass, please, my heart-loved one, for the Baroness de Godbeck. She would go to London, where her child is dying."

"Absolutely certainly no. She is merely a spy."

"Then I am not at the party to-night."

As 1916 wore on, the feat became progressively easier for Angèle to accomplish, it being painfully evident that her lord was cracking up as a result of his septuagenarian efforts to keep pace with his youthful inamorata. Angèle saw what she was doing, and rather liked the added notoriety accruing.

"Pourvu qu'elle le tue!" used to be a common phrase whispered in Brussels about this time. "Le vieux dégoûtant!"

Meanwhile "the old disgusting," fortified by pints of champagne, refused to heed the warnings of his medical staff. Angèle's gallivanting round was the proper tonic for him! Not noxious physics in a clinic cot!

*Püppchen, du bist mein Augenstern,
Püppchen, ich habe dich so gern!*

Thus the dance went on, under the evermore-exacting tuggings and goadings of capricious Twenty-one. But not for very long. As most people will recall, the midway of the War in 1917 witnessed the death of the tyrant of Belgium.

The subsequent fortunes of Angèle until the re-entry of the victorious Belgian Army into Brussels, in November, 1918, are redundant to this tale. Had Angèle known how prominently she figured on the Allies' black list, she might have spent a less care-free time than she did, and in all likelihood Berlin would have claimed her when the German armies fell back. But the same promptings of carnal supineness which had kept her in Brussels nearly four and a half years before, now caused her to stay on once again, this time to welcome back her own countrymen.

Vive la Belgique! Vive le Roi!

From her window, now situate above a more imposing thoroughfare, Angèle waved and cheered on the braves Belges marching victoriously below. Stay—she would go down and embrace them like all the other girls were doing! Come, her prettiest frock! Quickly, Paulette, quickly!

Not that day of the parade, but a few days

later, Angèle was arrested for the second time in her young life; but the look that she saw in the eyes of the Belgian officer who interrogated her, if not one of shooting, was certainly not of the other kind.

“You are charged with being a spy!”

“Who lays the information?”

“That is immaterial—there is so much of it. But if you want to know, the nominal informant against you is the Baroness de Godbeck.”

“*That old hen?* You know of her? I helped her to get to her dying son in London. *Dying son!* Why, it was to see her lover at Le Havre that she left Belgium! As if I didn’t know it! And also that she made love with the Boche aide-de-camp as well as coming to me, to make doubly sure! The people I have helped!” (Angèle here let loose a torrent of names and facts), “and now they turn on me! Yet what have I done? I did no more than hundreds of other Belgian girls here in Brussels. Do you think we have all been virgins since you left?”

“Spy! I did more for Belgium than any of them. Instead of arresting me, you ought to be thanking me for having rid Belgium of the tyrant. Poor, silly old tyrant! Yes, it was I, Angèle, who wore him down. But never mind! If you persecute me, I shall know what to do! I shall make the big scandal—tell everything I know about Comtesse . . .” (And here,

once again, Angèle released a flow of names.)

“The canaille that I helped!”

But Angèle never had to bring her big guns into action; the threat of them, alone, sufficed.

THE COUNT OF SMYRNA

THE trouble with the Count of Smyrna was that he took cocaine, and that when he took cocaine he talked—boasted. There was a reason why he took this maddening drug. He began taking it because his German secret service chief in Antwerp had ordered him to carry a pound or so on his journeyings across Allied frontiers, so that if he should come to be suspect and examined he could point to his cocaine and say: "A smuggler I may be. A spy—no!" This practice of making spies carry prohibited drugs as camouflage of their real activities was comparatively common. Sometimes it succeeded; but on more occasions it served to drive the carriers, living so perilously, to partaking. And then, as in the case of the Count of Smyrna, it was usually a pretty short journey to the firing squad. For spies had to have all their wits to get through.

There were other features about the Count which made his rather a striking case. Of all the tens of thousands of civilian war travellers who passed through one or other of the French Channel ports during 1914-16 and duly filed before unnoticed albeit lynx-eyed watchers, he was the only voyager to meet an extreme fate, the

port where he was spotted having been Dieppe.

And then the Count was such a fool with women; indeed, he owed his end to two of them—one a French demi-mondaine, the other a German female of similar commerce.

And the Count bragged so—said he was this, said he was that, and led the life in Paris; and how on earth he wasn't executed until May, 1916, is altogether rather a mystery. For let us see who he really was. . . .

In August, 1914, you might have beheld a down-at-heel hawker in the Friedrichstrasse, Berlin—Constantin Coudoyannis by name, origin the Levant, parentage unknown, but a mixture which gave the illegitimate one a fair footing in English, German, French and, of course, Greek. But at thirty, Constantin had made a mess of his life; so much so that the Berlin secret service, ever on the look-out for educated drifters "with something against them," promptly sent for him and said: "Fifty marks a day and bonuses if you go to France and England and work for us. Prison as a suspect if you refuse." Ever since the days of Stieber, who had charge during the Franco-Prussian war, the Wilhelmstrasse bureau had been wont to recruit, whenever possible, in this fashion—it put and held agents so entirely under its thumb.

The seedy hawker-of-no-country beheld his seediness; reflected; accepted.

"Good," pronounced his taskmasters, "we shall now polish you up externally, and you are to become a Greek journalist, favourable to the Allies. We shall get you a passport suitably made out. And passing by Belgium into France, you will report, at Antwerp, at the address we shall tell you. And there you will get your instructions."

The next person to enter on the scene was rather a picturesque character. She was a German woman, known alternately to the British and French as "Frau Kapitän Heinrichson" and "Mademoiselle Docteur," and she had a villa at Merxens, an Antwerp suburb. (When she latterly entered a Berlin asylum, wrecked by the drug she had introduced so freely to others, the stereotyped spy drivel of fiction was indulged. She must needs be a siren, holding her satellite workers in thrall. She must needs hop round France and England at her own sweet fairy-like will, shooting as she went. She "sent over three hundred unwanted spies to their deaths in England and France." The measure of this rubbish may be gauged from the fact that not seventy spies were executed, throughout the War, in the two countries mentioned.)

We shall call this German woman "Frau Doktor," a common appellation in the Fatherland, and one which the Germans themselves bestowed upon her—thereby leading to the

erroneous French "Mademoiselle Docteur." Frau Doktor was a big, florid blonde, and she had qualified into the police via the gay pre-war world of Homburg and Aachen and Spa and Baden-Baden. Her special job was to deal with just such riff-raff as the Greek "journalist" who now reported to her for orders. She also made a speciality of her own former kind—prostitutes. This sort of people she knew how to deal with, and sometimes she used to do this, revolver in hand at her desk. But to pretend that she was a feminine genius of espionage, fashioning all manner of sinister and brilliant designs, is just to perpetuate one more idiocy of the kind writers on this subject appear organically unable to avoid. Rather was she an intelligent, worldly-wise adventuress, with a gift for reading and dealing with rotters of both sexes.

Later under the dreadful "thirst régime" by which confessions were (and sometimes still are) extracted in French prisons, Constantin Coudoyannis thus described his first meeting with Frau Doktor on the second floor of a big Antwerp hotel:

"She looked me up and down for a long time and tried to cow me. Then she said: 'You are a needy one capable of much. You are educated, a linguist, of good appearance. But you must also be brave, obedient, sharp, and adroit. If you like adventure, you may grow to enjoy your

new profession. But you must also be chaste, sober and up betimes. And that is where I am doubtful about you. If you require to frequent haunts of pleasure, recollect that every country has its counter-spies of both sexes. Furthermore, engage satellites with the utmost circumspection, and prepare your journeyings, and your work generally, with the most minute care. I cannot overstress this. Study character and learn to retain the topography of the places you must visit. A good worker ought to be able to form an indelible imprint in a stroll of five minutes. Finally, take the fewest possible notes and only written in invisible ink, and destroy everything as and when you have finished with it. And now repeat to me what I have just said.”

The opening months of 1915 saw Constantin Coudovannis touring France as a pro-Ally journalist, sending back to Greece splendid accounts of Allied élan and resistance. He was able to do this through the German S.S. chief in Athens, Baron von Schenck, arranging matters with a local paper. Actually, during these opening months of apprenticeship Constantin was noting the whereabouts of French regiments. He visited Orléans, Bourges, Bordeaux, Toul, and would give poilus apéritifs while listening to their “war shop,” and, where possible, would finance gay champagne motoring parties for French officers. Once a fortnight he received

his payment through a Paris bank, and, as regularly, a paper parcel on which—somewhere—was written, in invisible lemon-formalin ink, Frau Doktor's correspondence cypher for the ensuing two weeks. He, for his part, and like all the others, had to send "Bonjour" post-cards to Frau Doktor from every town he visited to show that he was there. At Easter, 1915, his work was considered so promising that he received promotion. This proved his undoing. He was given more money—it subsequently reached as high a figure as 1,500 war-time francs a month—complimented, and instructed to report on such important matters as the following:

How the Paris entrenched camp was being fortified; the troops there.

Morale of civil population; chances of promoting a revolutionary movement.

Sailing of vessels from Calais, Boulogne, Le Havre, St. Nazaire.

List of factories working for Marine and War Ministries, and location of same.

Reports on the fortresses of Toul, Epinal, Belfort. Despatch of British troops to France. Situation of powder factories, and chances of blowing these up.

The whole thing went to Constantin's head. He imagined he was the greatest spy that ever

lived, to be given such missions. And he started "sniffing" his noxious white drug. Under the influence of this he, in turn, elected to become "the Count of Smyrna," and he took a flat in the Boulevard Haussmann and commenced to frequent such Paris haunts of night life as managed to thrive under the rose in those days of 10 p.m. darkness and composure. At one of these, in the Champs-Élysées, he met—on the day the *Lusitania* was sunk—the second demi-mondaine who was to contribute to his undoing. We shall call her Victorine, but she was really a police counter-spy of Balkan connection specially held in reserve for such cases as the Count of Smyrna.

In between the "Count's" frequent journeyings as an Athens journalist, there started an intensive Paris affair. Victorine behaved as if she really liked her new protector. And, but for his dope ravings, the Count was not unattractive. Tall, elegant, and slim, he had jet black hair and bright, dark eyes set in white, drawn features. His manners and hands were good, and he had clearly travelled a great deal. But whenever he returned from his outings, and little knowing that his lady-love was noting everything he said and did, for communication to the police, he would further indulge what had now become a passion for the Frau Doktor's camouflage cocaine. Incidentally, it said a deal

for that organiser's system that she very soon came to hear of her protégé's "goings-on," and that she formally forbade his frequenting Victorine, who was listed as dangerous.

The good Frau Doktor even went the length of omitting to despatch a new secret ink to Constantin. This was one of the German plums for a long time. Always experts at dyes, they managed to evolve chemical mixtures which the Allies could not keep up with, and these mixtures they used to send to their best agents in England and France by impregnating garments with them and getting innocent-looking neutral travellers to carry these tainted articles into Allied countries, where the ultimate recipients would know how to extract the precious concoctions.

Constantin—or the Count of Smyrna—found himself, in the early autumn of 1915, gradually slipping into trouble. Finding that his Paris bank balance of 40,000 francs had been seized and that he was no longer receiving his correspondence, he determined to go across to England and sound certain liaison agents there. He would also look into the despatch of British troops to France while in London. So off he started, leaving No. 118, Boulevard Haussmann in charge of Victorine.

While her protector was away the latter rummaged everywhere, and was at last able to

give to the police that proof positive which had been lacking of Constantin's guilt. She came across a piece of brown parcel paper which, when put to the test, developed secret instructions.

Returning via Dieppe, the "Count" was invited to place himself at the disposal of the authorities. He had failed to be chaste, sober, and matutinal. An otherwise clever and daring spy had not listened to Frau Doktor.

Constantin's trial was quickly over. Having confessed everything during a previous two-day "grilling"—the main feature of which was, as I have said, a Saharan thirst for the prisoner, with water trickling just beyond his reach—the accused could merely add, as a postscript for his military judges, that "Frau Doktor warned me that Paris was a dangerous city, full of temptations," but that his writings had shown him to have been a good friend of France.

Turning to Victorine, he made this not ignoble farewell speech: "Madame, I am dying by you and for you."

But Constantin died hard. There was never such a scene as that which followed his last awakening, en route for Vincennes, on May 26, 1916. Asked if he had any revelations to make, Constantin became a real scribe. He said that of course he had, and for two hours he wrote on . . . everything, anything that came into his

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head. Meanwhile Captain Bouchardon stood over him trying in vain to stay the scribbling hand. The condemned man, however, was convinced that they were playing a trick on him in order to obtain everything he knew. So he wrote on—what must have been the synopsis of almost an entire spy volume. Every now and then he would plead for “just ten minutes more.” Finally, he had to be forcibly removed from his seat and the pen wrenched from his hand.

At Vincennes, his back to the fatal wooden post, the seedy hawker of other days ceremoniously saluted the firing squad and began an address with the words: “Brave soldiers of France, I am a friend of France!” But he was silenced, and his last words consisted of a prayer in Greek, ending with the words, in French: “God have mercy on me.”

NOISES IN NO MAN'S LAND

It was a raw and drear, leaden-misted November afternoon of Flanders "Fifteen," but it was jolly cosy inside Colonel Capivion's cubby-hole (a trifle Flem-flamboyant) at Elverdinghe Château—the kind of cosiness that makes for musing.

Just then the Colonel—the Chief Staff Officer of an important local formation—wasn't musing of things military, as was his wont, but of letters he had written home and which he now re-read, standing back to the fire.

The mood swiftly over, he ranged his correspondence on the mantelpiece, lit a pipe, warmed his hands behind him, and looked out on the hopelessly triste landscape.

What could be done next?

That was ever his attitude towards the show—always thinking out new things that might be done. Frankly, he had never lived so fully, felt so attuned, in all his life. Damn it all, wasn't this his profession? "Ah!" (he leant forward and took a paper from his table) "this listening business!"

This listening business concerned a hint from Army Headquarters that useful results might be obtained by sending out Intelligence officers

to listen close up to the German wire in the hope of their overhearing scraps of enemy conversation. The results so far, it was true, had been nil, but one never knew, and anyway, the experience would "give these new Intelligence officers coming out a touch of war. Some of them look and behave as if they need it."

Colonel Capivion chuckled over that last bit. Perfectly true, perfectly true—from what he'd seen.

A notion came to him, and he pressed his bell for the new Intelligence officer.

"Afternoon, Tyron. Ever been out on patrol?"

"No, sir."

"Want you to go to-night?"

"Yes, sir."

Colonel Capivion shot a glance at his new "civilian helper" in search of any faltering. The fellow looked horribly new, but his teeth were not chattering. The colonel proceeded:

"Know what you've got to do? Get as near up to the Hun wire as possible and lie there and listen. I shall want a full report to-morrow morning of what you hear. Can you distinguish German dialect?"

"Think so, sir."

"What on earth does that mean?"

"Yes, sir."

Colonel Capivion turned to his large-scale,

red-inked trench map on the wall and consulted it; concentrated, pencil to brow.

"You'd better go out in front at Kluck Cottage," was the result. "Here—know it? Midnight to three ak emma is the best time—when their working parties are out. I'll speak to brigade—forty-sixth on the canal bank report there at ten to-night—and they'll supply guides and anything else necessary . . . bombs and things." The Colonel paused. Wasn't the fellow going to sling the bat at all? He'd always heard that Intelligence suffered from verbal . . . oh, well, that was his affair.

"That will be all," Colonel Capivion ended the interview.

Second-Lieutenant Tyron was new. There was no debating that. He went straight out to his Armstrong half-hut and threw himself on his camp bed in a fever of imaginative apprehension. The restraint of the interview burst things. So this was to be his last night on earth! Oh, yes, no question about that. He had been ordered to go out and spend three hours in No Man's Land at Ypres. And he knew nothing about bombs and had never fired his revolver. It would be murder—sheer, asinine, pointless murder. Wasted—thrown away—at twenty-three! Was this all that one could do for England? He began to tremble—to shake. Oh, blazes! Turn on the old Decca! That's it.

Good old George Grossmith—

*"It's the only, only way
It's the only thing to say."*

Yes, to-night was the night, all right. A drink, too. Where was the Scotch . . . ah, in the corner. Well, here's to Colonel Blarsted Capivion! And now, farewell letters home. No, none of that rot. Might come back. What then? Not likely, though. Oh, confound this shaking. Last night on good old earth. Funny business. No sign of funk on the canal bank though. Bombed to bits at Kluck Cottage. And the guides. Poor devils—probably for it too.

"Your son, in the short time he was here, had endeared himself to all of us."

Towards 10 p.m. a doomed but distinctly less windy young officer left his Douglas at Essex Farm and squelched in the direction of Brigade H.Q. The nearness of things, the inevitability, had braced, almost over-excited him. In the roomy dug-out, by the canal, he found the Brigadier, Brigade-Major and two others deep in a hand of cards. He waited. There was the customary pungent frowse—of recent stew, gaspers, wet khaki, canteen whisky, chloride of lime and underground damp. He examined Kirschner girls under the yellowness of storm lanterns.

"Oh, the Intelligence officer from Division?" presently vouchsafed the Brigadier, looking up. "So you're going out listening, eh? Of all the tommy rot. What on earth do you expect to hear? Little Willie arranging things with Rupperecht? Sit down. Whisky?"

"What I object to," continued the General, "is my having to detail two perfectly good men as guides. These back area people should supply their own supers, eh, what, Major?"

"Certainly, sir." But the Major winked across at the back area intruder, who noted the fact and rejoiced.

"Oh, for God's sake don't play that heavy muck again—let's have 'To-night's the Night,'" went on the Brigadier, as his A.D.C. took up a record. "Well, what are your plans? What are we supposed to do for you? Where's the proposed spot?"

"Kluck Cottage, sir."

Somebody whistled.

"I suppose you know that's about the most unhealthy place there is?" broke in the Brigade-Major. "No trenches—all caved in. Huns on high ground everywhere."

"I didn't select it, sir."

"Well, and what then?"

"Stop out from midnight to 3 a.m., sir."

"I call it utter rubbish," commented the Brigadier, preparing to deal the cards anew. "What does it matter to us who's in front so

long as we know it's nasty hostile Huns? How we're expected to win this war with all this bloody functioning I don't know. I always thought we were here to kill Germans, not to listen to what they cooed into each other's ears. However, I suppose you know what it's all about. It'll take a good hour getting up there after to-day's downpour. Major. . . ."

But the Brigade-Major who had winked was already beckoning the visitor to follow him without the precincts.

"Don't mind what the old boy says," was his advice. "They've just sat on his leave and he's as sick as mud. Come in here and have a spot. You'll need it. Been out before? Jove! That Colt the only thing you've got? Better take a couple of Newton Pippins as well. Know how to use 'em? Well, all you have to do is to pull out the pin and then put as large a distance as possible between you and the result."

Second-Lieutenant Tyron laughed as he stowed the bombs away. In the circumstances a fairly good laugh. The Brigade-Major was a comforting sort of cove. And the Scotch was distinctly comforting too. Besides, just think what a lucky blighter one was not to be here every night like these lads! The world looked less sanguinary. Another Scotch, and it began to look positively human.

But time was drawing on.

"Well, sorry, old thing, and all that," re-

gretted the Brigade-Major, "but I think you'd better be trekking. Guides are outside. I've picked you two old hands who know the line. One of 'em's the spit of Old Bill himself. I've told them you're very close to the Trinity. Drop in on the way back. Brekker. Like to hear anything. Tootle-oo, and mind the crater on the left at the top of Oxford Street. It's full of dead Turcos."

Tyron had to report at battalion headquarters on the way up, and also at company headquarters in the sector whence he was going out in front. At both he was the recipient of sleepy joshing and canteen whisky. The battalion C.O. had been jolly useful, however, in spreading out his trench map and indicating to the guides exactly where they must not go if they valued their future existences. They were to steer for the remnant—unmissable in the moonlight—of four cottage walls and there lie doggo fifteen yards from the Hun. Suicidal to attempt anything further, and they might be trodden on by a German working party or patrol even there.

On the paddle and squelch up to Company, one or two whizzbangs necessitated ducking, but whether it was the stimulant, the frosty night air, or the uncanny cheeriness of these officers (probably a combination of all three) Tyron was surprised at his own numbness to danger.

At Company he was invited to "kiss Fritz for moving on his Minnie," and then began the last lap of ooze and splash forward up to the evacuated front "trench." Tyron never knew quite when he reached this. He was wading shin deep, apparently along it, when he suddenly noticed that Old Bill and his mate were keeping to the clay above him. And that the scene had become illuminated by a Verey light.

"But they'll get you!" he called up hoarsely. "Come down here!"

"Can't 'elp that, sir," wheezed back Old Bill. "Can't afford to get our feet drippin' down there this weather. No change for next forty-eight hours." And the two old soldiers resumed their silhouetted tramp.

Tyron hesitated. Of course he must either order them down or go up himself. This would never do. Sublime sanguinary fools . . . to prefer to be scuppered than get their socks wet!

He drew himself up on the "parapet." Simultaneously another flare burst, followed by a staccato rat-tat-tat and the pinging and zipping of bullets, and Old Bill was wheezing from beneath a stockinged mass that formed his head: "*Down, sir!*"

And there they lay still, the three of them, flat on their bellies until the Verey light had died away; for the first law of patrolling in No Man's Land was never to move, but to retain any posture one might be in (preferably recum-

bent) beneath an enemy flare.

Presently they began to crawl cautiously forward, Tyron in the middle with a bomb more or less to hand in each pocket, Old Bill and Smiffy stumbling on either side with their rifles more or less ready. The going was slow—perhaps ten yards in as many minutes—for what an unholy shambles was that fifty or sixty yards between the trenches! Apart from the clogging mud, one tripped over broken rifles and dud shells, tangled wire and iron staves and sometimes the remnants of a body, while cratered pools had to be avoided all around. And every now and then the marauders would be brought up abruptly by another German Verrey light, or they would have to throw themselves flat while a machine gun swept arcwise above them.

Once, when half-way over, Tyron was caught by a flare and had to remain, as if struck that way, kneeling up and glued to a trench map—though he noticed that his companions were not carrying out instructions so rigidly. Their one grouse concerned the painful necessity for a strict no smoking rule in No Man's Land. And when Tyron offered them perfectly good chocolate, instead, the noise that they made masticating it—no less loud than the trio's enforced whispering—was such that he had to tell them to stop.

It was nearer one than midnight when they

eventually wriggled uphill into Kluck Cottage—a mass of scattered bricks with the suggestion of an interior.

“Better rest up ’ere awhile, sir,” suggested Old Bill. “Take directions like.”

They rested up—inside Kluck Cottage, whose “walls” reached to the small of their backs as they sat. Tyron looked about him. So this was No Man’s Land. Below there he could discern, in ghostly outline, the British wire. Some tree skeletons came between him and fleecy clouds racing past the moon. Ten yards forward, the beginning of the German wire. Water glistening in shell craters. Hardly any exchange of fire now. Just an odd flare or two. My God, the cold! Extraordinarily quiet. Planks being thrown about somewhere. Muffled words, far off. Good for listening, this lull. Of course! He was here to listen—forgotten that. That must be the Cloth Hall away over there. Strafing down there. Red glow.

Then, turning to things closer at hand, Tyron made an astonishing discovery: that both Old Bill and Smiffy had quietly dozed off.

He was smothering his mirth at the sight, when the stillness was broken by a loud German oath, followed by a hoarse, strained: “Aber—Gott, Mensch, bleib doch ruhig!”

Would somebody keep quiet!

A German officer—with a *Bavarian accent*—addressing his men in precisely the same hush-

hush tone and using almost the same words that he had done with Old Bill over the chocolate. Must be a Hun Intelligence patrol on the same sort of listening job that they were on!

Praying to heaven that Old Bill and Smiffy would not start snoring, Tyron strained eyes and ears in the darkness. The Boches seemed to be over there in the dip—about twenty yards away. *What was that?*

Through the calm night air came wafted across a Tyrolese chorus. Tyron recognised it; had often heard it sung in Munich. They were singing in their dug-outs in the front-line. He even heard the song capped by someone uttering a lusty Bavarian: "Ach; but what I'd give to be in the Löwenbraü to-night!"

There was only one Löwenbraü—and it was in Munich.

These people were Bavarians.

And our order of battle map showed this sector occupied by a Saxon corps.

There had been an important change.

The thing to do, obviously, was to return at once with this Number One information and not risk anything else.

Reaching over, Tyron prodded Old Bill and met the latter's waking stare with an enormously silent HUSH! spoken finger to lips. Then: "We're going. Follow me."

It was only when they had crawled some

minutes on their way back that Tyron recollected the existence somewhere in the immediate vicinity of a German listening-party. Supposing they suddenly came on Fritz crawling like themselves?

"We must try and get back at all costs," whispered Tyron into adjacent stockinged ears.

He had hardly done so when he found himself staring straight into the eyes of a German lying directly ahead in some weeds or a thicket. The features were white, strained, set, probably a replica of his own, and Tyron was certain they must belong to a German *Nachrichtungs-offizier* also on his way in.

Like two cats, England and Germany stared at one another. Utter stillness. Evidently Old Bill and Smiffy had also met their men. What would happen next?

Should he bomb? Tyron hoped and hoped to God that it wouldn't be necessary, and that the German officer would think likewise. He wanted so frightfully to get back alive, whole, with his information. The trouble was the men. Would they loose off? Well, that would be their pidjin, decided Tyron. If this Fritz—perhaps he had some good information, too—withdrew, he would do the same. But he'd be damned if he'd budge an inch until the Boche had done so first.

A full minute, perhaps, for all this.

"'Uns directly ahead," wheezed Old Bill, sidling up on his belly.

For a fleeting second the contact deflected Tyron's riveted attention. When he resumed his stare it was to stare into an empty thicket. The German had withdrawn.

So, too, did Tyron, Old Bill, and Smiffy—by agreement, as you might say, and in a slightly different direction.

"Good Lord, man," ruled the Brigadier at breakfast at Brigade H.Q., "but you should have bombed the swine! Never heard of such a thing! Withdrawing like that . . . bad for discipline!"

As for Tyron, he felt much more like bombing that Brigadier.

PORTRAIT OF MATA HARI

It is not difficult to be original in dealing with the case of Mata Hari; one has but to stick to the facts, a thing which hardly seems yet to have been thought of. Moreover, in the weaving of wondrous lore surrounding this Dutch Frau's art, lure, body, war-work, death, the real drama of the lady, and one pretty well unique in espionage, has escaped Mata's manifold biographers and interpreters.

Firstly, to sweep away the twaddle of her having been a temple dancing-girl in India and Burma, devoted alternatively to Buddha and the Goddess Siva, it may be permissible to acquire just background by swiftly passing our subject's life in review up to the outbreak of war:—

Margaretha Gertruida Zelle was born at Leeuwarden, Holland, on August 7, 1876, of a sound Dutch commercial father and a mother of some family distinction and property, whose name had been van der Meulen and who died in 1890, when Gerda was a big, loose-limbed backfisch of fourteen. From fourteen to seventeen, the flapper of destiny was at a pension near the Hague and she seems to have been a mover, since, in 1893, we find her answering a matri-

monial advertisement put in a local paper by a certain Captain Rudolf Macleod, of Scots ancestry, and who was home on a year's leave from the Dutch East Indies.

Things were fixed up tentatively, and in 1895 Rudolf returned to Europe; there was a proper engagement, and the honeymoon was spent at Wiesbaden. The first two years of married life were spent in Holland where, among other things, the young wife was presented at Court. A son, Norman (called after a Scotch great-uncle admiral), was born in 1896, and in the following year the husband was promoted major and sent to command a reserve battalion at Malang, Java. A daughter, Juana-Luisa, appeared in 1897, and next year the family removed to Sumatra.

Here the first shadow of violence crossed the future tragedy-queen's life. Little Norman was poisoned by a native nurse who was friendly-like with an N.C.O. the Major had been hard on. From that day things started going to pieces. The Major, who drank and was jealous, would brandish a revolver, use whips, and spit in his wife's face. The latter, in her time of trial, insisted that then she was spotless. Qu'importe! What seems certain is that there was some pretty fast colonial living in which both joined: drinking and debauchery, which included native dancing-girls, to whose grace and lasciviousness Dutch Gerda thrilled.

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In 1901 things snapped; the couple returned to Holland; the Major retired, and in 1902 his wife vainly sued for divorce, but was awarded £20 a month, the colour of a florin of which she never saw. Hard up, she dreamt of the stage, and for a year her father supported her, while Frau Macleod painstakingly developed the monumental dancing fraud which was to capture the more blasé salons of Paris.

This occurred in October, 1903, when the newly-incarnated "Mata Hari" was twenty-seven, and in the flower of her womanhood; a fine, strong, self-willed creature of quick intellect (she was self-taught in her fake genre) and much experience. The jaded Bois was certain it had landed a red-hot Burmese Princess, and Mata did not disabuse her admirers—rather clothed herself in mystery and legend. The great thing was that she had a thrilling bronze body and danced naked save for bangles, anklets, and breast-covers (they were poor). And that strange perfumes would be wafted across at the audience, and weird Hindu music wailed out, while she worked herself (and the company) up into a fever of eroticism.

"She hardly danced in the real sense at all," writes Colette, "but she knew how to undress progressively, and move a long, thin, and proud body as Paris had never seen one moved before."

Briefly she became the rage, and could choose

her lovers from "Tout Paris." However, there was still Husband to be reckoned with; and under his threats Mata had to break off her private triumphs and return to Holland. But 1906 saw her divorced by the Major (who died in 1918), and definitely embarked upon a music-hall career in Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and New York.

As for her alleged art, it is best summed up by Antoine: "It was all sacred nonsense. She was just a big, decorative savage. She couldn't dance at all. In 1913, I had to substitute Napierkowska for her."

In effect, shortly before the War, Mata's sham had spent itself, for the doctor who was afterwards to attend to her in St. Lazare Prison, found her frequently at this time, during his professional rounds, at expensive houses of assignation; while the one-time idol had progressively to descend from a villa at Neuilly to a room in the Grand Hotel. Mata never had the slightest idea of the value of money, and while preserved from the cocktail epoch, she had a weakness for champagne.

Well, there she is at the outbreak of war: a burst bubble, yet a woman who could point to many prominent men in the French capital as having been her lovers.

Actually, she was in Berlin, driving with the local chief of police, the day war was declared. At her trial she admitted this, also that he gave

her £1,500 ("my current figure") and the code number H-21, in order that she might correspond with him without let or hindrance when he went to take up his duties as chief of the German Secret Service at Amsterdam. All this was admitted; but never any espionage.

In the first weeks of the conflict Mata journeyed to Paris ("in order to get my Neuilly furniture") via Holland, Belgium, and England. Then transpired a remarkable and never-quite-explained phase. Mata went to Vittel, and there for seven months nursed a blind Russian, Captain Marow, who had been knocked out right at the start in the French Army. She swore Marow was the only man she had ever really loved.

Was she spying all this early 1914-15? Although there was never any actual proof, the presumption against her was strong. Picture her. Her sympathies were always pro-German. She needed money. She had received a large sum from the German Secret Service and a baptismal code "name." She did not deny regularly using the Dutch diplomatic bag to correspond with her native land. She had elected to settle at the foothills of the Vosges, then scattered with encampments and especially the resort of aviators.

The President, at her court-martial, was explicit. He said: "We know what you were chiefly doing at Vittel and later. You were hav-

ing affairs with flying officers. You picked out the ones whose duties took them on special missions. You got to know where and when we were dropping our agents behind the German lines. You communicated this information to Amsterdam via the neutral channels I have mentioned. In this way you brought several brave men—and women—to their deaths, and you seriously interfered with the Allied campaign. Deny it, Madame!”

“I do!” said Mata Hari, who went on to confess that she had a weakness for uniforms of all kinds and hoped the Court would be gallant towards her.

In April, 1915, tired of nursing, Mata came to Paris and was soon a marked woman on account of her intimacies with French and Allied officers (she had five languages). In effect, hers was all through what may be not inaptly termed “pillow espionage.” Although thirty-nine and fading, by literally forcing herself to be physically attractive, she soon won her way to the fore in the mad maelstrom of war-time excess.

In late 1915 or early '16 Mata had the first of her two brushes with ourselves. She arrived, I think at Southampton, from Spain, and was promptly met on the quayside and taken up to Scotland Yard. There ensued a remarkable scene in the room of a well-known K.C., still going strong. This “spy-baiter-in-chief”

sought for several hours to worm Mata's story from her—her secrets, her activities—what, in vulgar parlance, "her game was."

But he had to admit failure. To all his ruse questioning, his cunning guidance of the Dutch-woman towards hidden pitfalls, Mata had answer. "I am a professional of love," was what she said in essence. "Hence my funds, friends, journeys. I am nothing else. If I am, then show me!" Our K.C. couldn't; so he did the next best thing. He said, "All right. Don't imagine we don't know all about you, though. I advise you to go more carefully in future. Meanwhile you may go back to Spain, for you are not going on to Holland."

And back to Spain, in truth, Mata had to go.

There she seems to have remained for several weeks—until the early springtime of 1916, when rumours of a great coming Allied offensive filled the air. Clearly Mata's place was the zone of the armies in France. So across into that country she hied, taking a breeze at Biarritz on the way. Without much doubt, Mata contributed her quota to our undoing on the Somme though there was never any proof of it. She still could rely on her diplomatic bag. In Paris, short of being a congenital idiot (and she was far from that though much too voyante for a first-class female agent) she could not fail to assimilate information, daily, of the approaching offensive. Its location, almost the day of

its commencement, were widely known. Via the pillow, Mata must have been able to cross a lot of t's and dot a lot of i's for her Amsterdam friend (in passing, she was not still beautiful and dancing at this stage. She never danced after 1913 and she was now getting somewhat gross and *passée*).

However: in the summer of 1916 she was signalled by several French officers as being much too inquisitive and she was about to be arrested when she had recourse to the established custom among spies-for-profit when they see the game is up. She went to the head of the French Deuxième Bureau and offered to sign on as an agent in the service of France.

From now on to the end, or rather to her arrest six months later, was enacted the real drama of Mata Hari alluded to at the outset. The opposing Secret Services began to play ping-pong with her. The French, being dead certain she was a German agent, took her on, paying her 15,000 francs for some hall-marked information she had obtained from Spain and which told in advance of certain spots where the Germans were going to land arms from submarines on the Moroccan coast (the arms were duly intercepted. At Mata's court-martial the President took a rather unfair advantage of this situation, saying: "How could you have got that information unless direct from enemy sources?" To which Mata quite rightly replied:

"After all, I did what I could for France. My information was good").

The correct thing at this stage might have been to have interned Gerda Macleod for the duration of the War. But that would scarcely have served the purposes of the French Deuxième Bureau, which, as well as getting rid of her, wished to use Mata as a means for hoodwinking the German Secret Service.

In dying, this dangerous woman should also serve France . . .

The plan put up to Mata was that she should go round into Belgium with a list of six French agents whom she was to visit surreptitiously behind the German lines, giving them fresh instructions. The Germans would assuredly shadow Mata, would discover she was in the service of France, and her probable finish would be up against a wall at dawn at the Tir National, Brussels. Also, and more important, the Germans would be bamboozled regarding the identity of France's *genuine* agents and the true nature of the material required of these, since Mata's "instructions," for passing on, would all be specially cooked so as to mislead an intercepting enemy, and of Mata's six designated agents, five were Belgians positively known to be in the pay of Germany and habitually giving France false information, while the sixth had been proved a dangerous "double-crosser," i.e., a worker for both sides. The French hoped that

the last-mentioned, like Mata, would be removed from this mortal scene as a result of the spoof.

Such was the plan; and Mata was agreeable. It was decided she should go round to Belgium via Spain and Holland, and she sailed in the *Hollandia* from Bilbao. But alas for her, she had forgotten her K.C. at Scotland Yard! On learning from our Secret Service in Spain the identity of a certain passenger in the *Hollandia*, London issued orders for that vessel to be searched at sea and Mata was put ashore at Gijon, near Vigo, one November day of 1916.

Had the French Deuxième Bureau informed us of its merry little plan, this might not have occurred. As events developed, Mata repaired to Madrid, stopping at the Palace Hotel, then the hub of all neutral gossip.

She must have been hereabouts in rather a dilemma. Working for both sides, what should she do next? France was distinctly too warm. She required cash. At her elbow were the German naval and military attachés, Lieutenant von Kröon and Captain von Kallé. They also had charge of German S.S. work locally. Mata went to them, and in order to imbue confidence, gave them her list of the six French agents. This is known, because the "double-crosser" was executed by the Germans in Brussels three weeks later, while the other five, the ones who had been misleading France, were left untouched.

As it is fairly certain Mata also handed over all her faked "instructions," the French coup may be said to have succeeded, i.e., for the second time, use of Mata brought gain to our Allies, a circumstance hardly to be overlooked.

The "spurlos versenkt" campaign of sea frightfulness then approaching its height, it was only natural that Mata should be switched on by Kroon and Kallé to obtaining information concerning Entente shipping round the coasts of Spain. But the kind of living Mata was now resorting to—champagne and lovers in a wild neutral Indian summer—did not make for accuracy. Soon she got loose in her facts, causing neutral and even Spanish vessels to be torpedoed; and just as the French had previously done, the Germans now cast round for some means of being rid of her. Ever since she had admitted having worked for France she had been listed as "tainted." Also she knew so much, dash her! And she was now the most obvious suspect in all Europe. What further use could she serve?

To this Mata supplied an answer. She would return to France and make a speciality of Tank officers—then the secret-keepers of the hour. She pointed out that among her friends was a recent French War Minister (this was true). With alacrity, Kroon and Kallé jumped at the offer, and forthwith wirelessly from Madrid to Amsterdam, in a code which they must have had

good reason to fear was understood by the French, asking that H-21 should be paid the equivalent of 15,000 pesetas—the sum Mata had struck out for—via a Netherlands bank in Paris.

Thus, for the second time, now by the Germans, Mata was handed “on a salver” to the other side in order that she might be made away with—since it is hardly to be doubted that had the German Secret Service in Madrid really wished to protect its agent it would have evolved other means of communication and of payment.

The rest is short telling. The Eiffel Tower of course intercepted the Madrid request. The French cypher merchants of course understood it. And this was really too much! Here was H-21—Mata Hari—arriving back in France once more and about to draw a large sum forwarded by the German S.S. at Amsterdam!

Mata never drew her pesetas. When she was arrested at the Plaza Athénée in the Avenue Montaigne, on February 13, 1917, she had just four louis d’or in her handbag.

Her subsequent attitude at her court-martial on July 24-25 was rather deplorable—for her. She relied on a mixture of cajoling her three military judges and defiance; and be it said that a spring and summer in St. Lazare had not improved her looks. She wore a blue tailor-made, three-quarter-length, and a three-cornered mili-

tary-looking hat, and she made the most of her tall, contoured figure. But despite her fine eyes and sensual features (notably full lips and tell-tale nostrils), Mata really should not have resorted to trying to project charms which were no more. Her defiance took this form, oft reiterated: "I am not a Frenchwoman. I am a neutral. I had a right to travel, to have German lovers. The money I received was for my nights of love. Yes, even the pesetas was how von Kroon intended paying for his pleasure—getting his Secret Service to pay for it. You cannot execute me for receiving money!"

Such was her defence, in voicing which she at times grew quite angry; then would fall back upon cajoling "*ces officiers galants*." As for her counsel, he was nearly an octogenarian and hopelessly enamoured. He used to sit below his haughty client and periodically pass her up smelling salts and bonbons, both of which Mata would disdain. (The old fellow was afterwards, on the morning of execution, to be the principal in a ludicrous scene. While Mata was dressing, seated on her bed before half-a-dozen officials, he burst out dramatically: "You may not execute my client! It is against the law of the Republic! She is expecting to become a mother!" After the first moment of amazement, the Procureur de la Republique almost compassionately enquired: "And whom may the father be, seeing that no one has visited her?"

"I have!" proclaimed the old lawyer. Incredulity, murmurings. Yet the matter was to have been further gone into, had not this come from Mata, on the bed: "Don't be a silly old fool!")

To proceed: The trial took place in a vast, empty courtroom, there being less than a dozen present. The most dramatic moments were when two of Mata's witnesses were called: a former War Minister and the virtual head of the French Foreign Office. Each had been the accused's friend. And to each, Mata solemnly said: "Monsieur, I regret exceedingly having to bring you here. But I must ask you this question. Did I ever on any occasion while in your company discuss military or political matters?"

To which, each witness answered with an emphatic "No!" and left the stand.

Nevertheless Mata was doomed, and she suspected it, though she never thought, later, that she would be shot, believing that her influential former protectors would intervene. Her judges took three-quarters of an hour arriving at a decision, and sentence was read in a corridor. There, the traditional "present arms!" given to the attendant troops, while intimating death, brought a twinkle of appreciation to Mata's eyes.

At first fierce and "exaltée," Mata finished up by being a docile prisoner. She neither smoked nor read nor wrote. Nor used she to

dance (as idiotically put about). She did sing, however, now and then, with her prison comforter, Sister Léonide. Her chief distraction was good food.

On October 15 she had her last assignation, at Vincennes. Her execution has been written and distorted to death. Here let just a few particulars suffice:—

She was quite brave, and pro-German to the end. She had a stiff rum before leaving her cell and kept repeating: "Ah, ces Français!" She refused Léonide's ultimate request that she should pardon the French. They had used her and abused her, she said. When an officer formally asked if she had any revelations to make, she answered curtly: "If I had any I'd make them to myself!" She called for a Lutheran pastor and was baptised from a cup of water, poured over her as she knelt combing her rich brown hair. She asked for her warmest dress and her nicest shoes—her feet were ever her greatest care. She powdered and put on ordinary gloves buttoning which she turned to the prison company and facing them squarely said: "I am ready!"

Her courage and simulated indifference she maintained stoically. She wrenched herself free of gendarmes who wished to hold her by the arms. "Don't you dare touch me! I'm not a thief! Ah, ces Français!" (this was her leit-motiv). In the Governor's bureau she spent ten

minutes writing three letters and she made a quip on rising. "See that each goes in the right envelope! I don't wish to bring any more trouble!" Noticing that Sister Léonide was weeping, she then clutched the latter's hand, saying: "Come, keep my hand clasped firmly."

All across Paris, in the darkness, she clutched Léonide's hand—so firmly at times (related the Sister later) that it hurt. This handclasp was Mata's means of bearing up.

At Vincennes she helped the little Léonide down from the car. Then she walked along the line of dragoons and Chasseurs Alpains (detailed as execution squad) and of her own volition, and still holding Léonide by the hand, strolled to the post and faced about. She never waved any "long white gloves" at her executioners. She disliked the French much too cordially for any such compliment. Besides, though never actually tied, her arms were circled behind her by a rope. What she did do just before the volley was to blow kisses to her sobbing lawyer and pastor.

But her last words and last look were for Sister Léonide, whose hand she still held until the ultimate minute of her life. Mata's last words were these: "Maintenant c'est fini . . . lâchez moi. Mettez vous à droite. Je regarderai de votre côté. Adieu!"

While an officer cruelly but of necessity again read sentence, Mata, who had refused the red blindfold handkerchief, looked the troops

straight in the eyes. Then she turned her head abruptly and sought the praying, kneeling form of Sister Léonide.

She fell all in a huddle and it was past a pile of clothing rather than a human form that the troops had to march, eyes right and fanfares sounding in salute of Death. Nobody claimed the body—this body that had once thrilled Paris and been coveted by connoisseurs—and later in the morning it was dissected and distributed to various medical institutes.

USEFUL GIRL AT ARRAS

It was while "Bertha" was shelling Paris from its fastness in the hills near Laon, seventy miles away, that some British officers connected with "Artillery Intelligence" were sent down to study on the spot how the French managed to achieve such striking results in the matter of rapidly assembling information causing immediate and effective counter-battery fire to be opened on offending German guns.

Of the fifty-odd sections and sub-sections into which Intelligence in the field came eventually to be split—and which ranged from propaganda, "megaphoning over" the enemy, to piloting round official visitors such as a Bottomley or a Shaw and trying to get them crumped—this artillery side finished up among the most important. Arising out of the monstrous accumulation of six or seven thousand batteries on both sides of the line, and never pre-dreamt of on any battlefield, "Artillery Intelligence" was concerned solely with the location of hostile batteries and with their movement and grouping—since the enemy's strategical intentions could at times be read in advance by carefully watching how he was rearranging his guns, particularly his "heavies."

The circumstances of our Allies' tackling of "Bertha" will be readily recalled. Two days after his March crash-through, and in order still further to depreciate civilian morale, Ludendorff turned "Bertha" on to Paris, where shells—at first thought to be bombs from an invisible aeroplane—proceeded to drop most of the day, well sprinkled, and at intervals of a quarter of, or half an hour. Obviously, the thing had to be stopped, and quickly, after the horror of the fifth day (Good Friday), when seventy-five were killed at Mass in the Church of St. Gervais, chiefly women and children.

"Supposing they start shelling Kent from Ostend?" reflected, in turn, our brasshats. "Better see how the French are getting down to it." That was what put our batch of students en route to the Craonne plateau.

On the way down cars were stopped at a certain French artillery headquarters possessing something of a reputation, and where it was painfully clear that our friends had stolen a march on us in the way of red-tapeless co-ordination. A German battery "started up." Successful counter-battery fire being the essence of sound artillery work, it behoved our Allies to strafe the offending battery with a minimum of delay. But which Boche was firing? Scores of enemy batteries, of all calibres, had been located opposite. How to pick and fall upon the currently active one?

"You shall see everything we have to show, Messieurs les Officiers Britanniques," welcomed the French colonel. "The infantry have just telephoned that they are being shelled from somewhere over by Chauny. That is a lot of use—but wait!"

"Ah, Messieurs, here is something better" (a minute or two later). "One of our air patrols wirelesses that the battery firing is at 44.36. Voyons, let us see on the map where that is."

The point had scarcely been plotted when a confirmatory message came from an observation balloon. Yet, even so, things were not going too quickly, or quickly enough, for the French colonel. "Nothing in from the flash spotters yet?" he inquired impatiently.

"At the instant, my Colonel," from a staff-captain. "It gives the position slightly to the left—at 44.35."

"Ca va. We shall now see what the Sound Rangers have to say. Ah, Messieurs les Britanniques, what an invention is this sound ranging! And all done by a struggling lieutenant . . . Yes, what is it? 44.36? That is what the Sound Rangers say? Plot it, my captain, plot it. And after that we shall come to a decision and that will be the end for the time being of Monsieur Boche."

A brief silence followed. Then, while the plotting still continued, a fresh voice announced from the telephone board: "Wireless Intelli-

gence say that are intercepting a Boche battery being registered to the call sign KD. They say they believe that call sign corresponds to the howitzer battery at 44.36."

"And they are perfectly right!" "Lefèvre"—the French colonel turned to his staff-captain—"see that things are put in motion at once. The usual measures."

Perhaps five round minutes had elapsed from the arrival of that first vague message from the infantry. Another couple of minutes, and one heard the French counter-battery work in full blast.

"The great thing, Messieurs les Britanniques," the French C.O. observed as his very impressed visitors took their leave, "is co-operation and goodwill. Without that there is nothing to be done. Everybody here is united under one head regardless of what corps or arm he may belong to. I have under me gunners, sappers, airmen—every form of artillery Intelligence welded into one self-contained organisation. Is it the same with you, gentlemen?"

"*It is not!*" said the visiting spokesman, with rather more warmth than was necessary.

But the Bertha business later in the day, farther down south, gripped the Britannic gentlemen even more if that were possible.

"We are managing to locate the pigs down to a square kilometre or so," explained the

French officer detailed to attend to the delegation of learners. "We believe la Bertha is on a rail and that they run her out for each shell and then in again and round to a new point. Paris has fairly got the jumps this morning—the Invalides on the 'phone every few minutes. But if you will come with me to the command post you shall see our counter-measures in operation. What we have done has been to detach a complete Intelligence system in miniature to concentrate on la Bertha. And all the aces mobilized for it."

Nor was the exposition excessive. From the command post the Britannics beheld a display of imaginative French efficiency at top notch.

"Paris got another one five minutes ago. The Invalides says it fell in Montparnasse," the visitors were informed. And then they watched the system at work. Progressively their attention was directed to special spotting machines, well protected and hovering continuously over the area suspected of harbouring la Bertha's lair; to an exclusive Sound Ranging section located on a hill top; to a wireless installation standing by to intercept only Bertha messages; to a trio of "Blimps" swaying in the breeze; to a visual observation group located on the hidden monster's immediate front and seeking to get an intersection on white puff and flash as Bertha boomed anew each fifteen minutes or half hour.

"They've all got nothing else to do but concentrate on la Bertha," expounded France. "All other enemy batteries simply don't exist for them. Ah! There she goes again! Now watch!"

The Britannics did so. Some five or six minutes elapsed while the intricate and delicate scientific-cum-human system functioned. Then there ensued a veritable roar.

"Our special anti-Bertha counter-battery group!" enthused the French officer. "Always standing by!"

. . . Followed presently by terrific explosions which shook the command post.

"Our special anti-Bertha bombers!" the same voice rang out. "Retained exclusively for the job!"

It was on the return run up to the north that Captain O'Callaghan broke what had been (for him) an unheard-of all-day-long brooding, almost resentful, silence. In fact, more than once his health had been inquired after.

"I don't give a damn for the French and all their functioning," was what he had to say, but the tone of it was what mattered, causing his companions to glance in his direction for more.

"I'll bet anyone in this car ten quid to ten bob that without any of their functioning . . . their flashing and spotting and listening and wireless . . . I'll get just as effective counter-battery

work, *and inside of thirty seconds, me foine fellows!*"

"Really, O'Callaghan, you should see a vet!" threw in a voice.

"Be damned to your vets! Who of you will take me on?" pursued a roused Ireland. "And all you'll have to do will be to stop off at Arras. In fact, you won't have to sturr from me billet, which happens to be in the only débit left in the town. Now who'll take me? Ten bob to ten quid, orr the other way around, that I can deal with Fritz quicker than what you've been seeing and with none of yer fussing and frilling?"

"Done!" shouted one of the party.

"Your hand on it!" stretched Captain O'Callaghan.

Distinctly unhealthy as it had become, Arras still sheltered a few score diehard civilians even in April, 1918, and one of their number was Marie-Jeanne of the little débit in the winding, narrow, largely demolished main street. Marie-Jeanne, tall and strapping, and what they called "belle fille," had been born in that débit, and she intended to stay there. Perhaps the "Capitaine Irlandais" had something to do with it also, but that is neither here nor there.

Just now O'Callaghan was chaffing her as she poured out the after-mess cafés and fine champagnes for four ragging albeit expectant guests.

"Of course, you may have to wait some

time," the host of the evening presently broke off. "But I've got some of the latest records out, and Marie-Jeanne's not afraid to go down to the cellar after the bubbly. Are ye, Marie-Jeanne?"

"Compris bubbly," said Marie-Jeanne, disappearing.

"Stop that gramophone at once!" from Captain O'Callaghan, rising suddenly some while later.

The unmistakable poop of a German battery near-by had already drawn the company to attention.

"Marie-Jeanne! Quickly!"

"Ah, but you bore me with your guns!" pouted the Arrageoise. Nevertheless she put down her glass of champagne and made for the door.

There she stood, hand to ear, and leaning intently forward into the still, silent street.

"*Shut yer jaw!*" growled O'Callaghan at someone who had started to giggle.

For a minute or more there followed a hushed silence; then, once again, that near-by poop.

"That's the 150 millimetre at Neuville," announced Marie-Jeanne, coming back casually into the room. "Now I suppose you want to telephone?"

But the "Capitaine Irlandais" was already at that.

"That you, Riley? O'Callaghan here. It's the hundred and fifty in the crossroads ravine at Neuville. Can you switch on to him straight-away? That's a good boy! I've some unbelievers in the mess this end!"

"*Whist!*" hushed the host, turning again to his guests, and with a look in which mischief mingled with humour. "Whist now for our own!"

"But how do we know that it mayn't have been just a coincidence or a fluke?" presently objected the other end of the bet, after quiet had returned following rapid counter-battery work.

"Because you can stay here as long as you like, me foine fellow, all night long if you like, and if Marie-Jeanne'll stay up out o' bed, and there'll be no difference! 'Tis three months now, come next Saturday, that I discovered what a treasure was under this roof. If you don't believe me, go and enquire at Corps. They've got a paper on her—though, of course, I was told not to be a ruddy fool and to get on with me job. Me job, indeed! Why, I circulate Marie-Jeanne's locations to most of me friends at batteries. They're marked 'M.J.' so that they can take 'em or leave 'em. Faith, 'tis on the staff she should be!"

"But how does she do it?" enquired a second sceptical one.

"Well, it's like this," volunteered a now-expanding Irishman. "This clay ground here is top-hole for the Sound Rangers, as you know. Well, it works out much the same for the human ear. Only—Marie-Jeanne has got an extraordinarily sensitive ear. And then you must remember she's lived constantly on this very spot all the war, all her life, and has got used to every echo. The whirr of the shell overhead, giving direction, tells her almost as much as the actual poop-off. But, of course, she's no use when there's a strafe on—she can only function when batteries fire individually. Anny time you like, gentlemen, I'll be glad to entertain you."

"I think she'd better come up for a visit to Ypres," suggested a third member of the circle.

"She'd be no use there at all, at all. No use a mile away from Arras . . . bedad, if that isn't another one! Marie-Jeanne!"

"Flût!" commented that lady, but emerging from the kitchen and making for the front door of the débit; there to stand once again in silent waiting.

Poop . . . whir-r-r-r . . . plonk!

"That's a new one—never heard that one before," pronounced Marie-Jeanne. "And now perhaps you'll leave me to my laundry!"

"The devil it is!" ejaculated the Capitaine Irlandais. "That means I'll be having to say good-night to you, gentlemen. You see, she's

equally good with new ones—puts us on to them right away.”

“You must see yourselves off yourselves,” added Captain O’Callaghan, as he again took off the telephone receiver.

MERELY A RUMOUR

"My job was partly rumours—perhaps you knew it," mentioned Commander Belton, R.N., retired. "So that what you say there, Downing, naturally interests me a great deal."

"Oh, so you did naval yarn-spreader, too, did you? Well, that's how it panned out." Major Downing, also retired, lit a cigar and edged his chair closer to the fire. The two former staff officers of the Intelligence branch, naval and military, had lingered on in the smoking-room of the country house where both were guests for the week-end.

"It was in the summer of 1925," went on the Major. "Remember the bird's name, too—Foerstner. I'd just finished a solo tramp in the Black Forest and ran into him in Baden-Baden on the way home. He was obviously on the level—knew all the ropes—and seemed fairly bursting to talk. So I let him yap away. So deucedly interesting, listening to an ex-Hun 'I' man high up."

"Dare say it was," dryly commented he who had once been known as "Rumours" among his hush-hush naval brethren. "Still . . . the finesse we put into that Russians-landed-in-

Scotland myth! And so it was all a wash-out, eh?"

"'Fraid it looks like it."

"What did Fritz say, again, exactly?"

"Simply that as soon as the Kriegsamts began to get deluged with reports of Russkis being seen in trains all over England they set things in motion with their star artists in Russia—probably via that frontier stationmaster fellow Manasevitch, who used to give Hindenburg all the dope—and received a categorical denial of the whole story. Apparently from tout-à-fait en haut or straight from the horse's mouth."

"Umps. The best thing," laughed a none the less slightly peeved ex-Commander, "was the correspondent wallah who wrote columns of how he had actually *seen* the old Russkis disembarking for hours at Ostend!"

"Mistook Winston's brigade, didn't he? The all-tied-up-in-string Dutch tourists?"

"That's about it."

The two remained with their reflections for a while; then the Army resumed:

"And would you mind telling me, Belton, what was the precise idea behind that Russian invention? One presumes there must have been one?"

"Oh, there was. I suppose you Army lads never had the same opportunities to score from putting about false reports. Pity. Rumours

can play quite a big part in a show if properly manipulated. Atmosphere just right."

"For instance?"

"Well, of course, there are rumours and rumours. In our show there were rumours for below deck, rumours concocted for officers' wives inflicted with vanity-babble, rumours painstakingly elaborated to bamboozle the Marine Amt in Berlin. And as the U-boat war developed, the protective side of 'Rumours' expanded enormously. The ideal was to make a port—or a ship, for that matter—such a hotch-potch of rumours that it became impossible even for the cleverest spy to sift the wheat from the chaff. And I think there were spies in some of our ships."

"You don't mean it?"

"Oh, yes, I do. No one is going to convince me that the blowing up of *Bulwark*, *Hawke*, *Vanguard*, *Natal*, and *Princess Irene* were all purely accidental, when the only other similar case in the War—the *Leonardo da Vinci* at Taranto—was traced to Austrian agents putting a clock bomb near the magazine. But that's rather off our point. We had to hatch rumours by the dozen to cover the sailing of transports and the movement of the Fleet and its auxiliaries. One day we would set the stage, say, at Harwich, as if a sweep of the North Sea was to be carried out the following morning. Or else it would be that a flotilla was coming south

from Scapa and would arrive in a couple of days' time. The pastime had its wheels within wheels. One had to see that the right ears were reached—either outright suspects or people we knew would go right off and chat twenty to the dozen."

"Silliest rumour I ever heard," interjected Downing, "was that one about Hamel having joined the Germans. Persistent and circumstantial it was, too."

"Please don't suspect us of that, old man," smiled the Commander, rising and mixing himself a whisky-and-soda. "Dirt was outside of our province. I regret exceedingly, but there was every indication of that having been the work of a lady—or shall we say of a witch?—whose feelings had not been responded to. Incidentally, they said the same about Védrières."

The Major nodded agreement and followed suit in the refreshment line.

"But this Russian business?" he reminded, resuming his arm-chair.

"That was of the painstaking, strategical variety," continued the other. "Why, I even remember myself putting in ten minutes of solid and artistic lying with a Cabinet Minister's wife. Couldn't you hear her later . . . 'Isn't it too wonderful about the Russians! Of course, it's true, dear. Six trainloads passed through Carlisle this very morning. Lieutenant-Commander Belton, of the Admiralty, seems to know

all about it!’ But to cut the cackle, the desirability of stimulating that myth had a simple enough origin. If Russian divisions were being landed in Scotland, they were clearly being convoyed across and protected by a portion of the Grand Fleet—that is to say, the latter had its attention temporarily diverted to northern waters. A good moment, in fact, for von Scheer to come out and raid the East Coast. When—had he bitten—he’d have got it hot and strong.”

“So that was it!”

“Oh, but we had better ones than that—real winners. One of the reasons the German Fleet surrendered was the effect of a rumour. Perhaps the main reason.”

“What happened?”

“Perfectly straightforward. Clear case for ‘Rumours’ to butt in. Our agents at Kiel and Cuxhaven began reporting at the end of October that things were starting to slip pretty badly below decks. Morale gone, ratings talking Bolshie and so on. Well, what more obvious than to entice Fritz on, to help him crack up still further? And what more obvious way to do this than to spread rumours in their naval bases of Bolshevism in the *Grand Fleet*—which, in parenthesis, wasn’t feeling any too grand itself just thereabouts. ‘Come across and join us under the red flag’ sort of stuff. Anyway, that was what our agents over there were told

to put about. We even got across to one of them a confirmatory photograph showing the red flag in *Iron Duke*. A flourish of finesse at the very end, in fact."

"Sound work, sound work," complimented the Army "I" man. "The only thing we can put up against it in the same line is Allenby's final flutter towards Damascus. One of the reasons he got through so easily was because he'd fairly 'rumoured' the Turk into believing that we weren't going to attack from the coastal end of the line at all. Extraordinary how the Bull broadened out at the end compared with his Arras days!"

"Rumours can be very useful."

"Quite so, Belton, you've shown that. But I wonder what on earth it'll be like in this 'next-war-if-any'? As a case in point, surely broadcasting will radically alter things?"

"All sources of news and information will be held tightly as never before in any next war. There'll be no more war correspondents and no more Northcliffes. As for the spreading of rumours for Intelligence purposes, they will be—or should be—all hatched and circulated by one chief, no matter whether they affect the air, the sea, or the land. Otherwise there's going to be the most unholy muddle. There very nearly was at times in the last show. Did you ever hear" But the speaker broke off and chuckled over the memory instead.

R

"Hear what? This is all most illuminating."

"Well, if you promise not to assault me, I may be able to throw a little light on a certain invasion scare under which the War House laboured in the first winter—to be exact, at Christmas-time, 1914. Remember it?"

"Do I not! K. refused to send across another draft for nearly a month, though we were only clinging on at Ypres by our eyelids. Jackie French was furious."

"As a matter of fact, viewed dispassionately, Kitchener could scarcely have done anything different. He had to man the Norfolk coast besides hurriedly throwing up earthworks there. His own lot was raw and rifleless. So I suppose he sat on further Territorials going out till things had died down."

"And on shells and stores and equipment also."

"All a regrettable misunderstanding. What happened was this. For reasons best known to our sea mandarins, 'Rumours' was ordered to circulate reports, via its agents in Germany, that our Grand Fleet was preparing to cover a landing by several divisions on the German coast. Probably the notion was to puzzle old Tirpitz and his crowd as to our naval intentions. But I hardly think due allowance was made for one likely repercussion. You see, just as soon as the Germans decided that at least precautionary measures should be taken against a possible

British landing, they proceeded to move up reserves to various vulnerable points—round the mouth of the Elbe and the Frisian Isles, to Schleswig, and so forth. And, naturally enough, these suspicious concentrations were reported in due course to the War Office by military agents in Germany. Day after day K., I believe, would be confronted by this kind of thing:

Agent's report. On December 10 the Third Ersatz Brigade was ordered to concentrate in the area round Borkum.

In the upshot the War Office, entirely in the dark as to what 'Rumours' had done in the first instance, arrived at the perfectly understandable conclusion that Fritz was preparing a descent on *this* country. Hence the pyramids."

"So you see my point," the senior service was adding. "In the next war——"

"Belton," interrupted the Army, rising, "si non e vero . . ."

"Oh, but it is vero—very much so, I can assure you!"

"Then, drinks on it!"

THE NUDE JUNKER

Not many now remember events in the Suippes-Somme Py sector during the days and nights following September 25th, 1915—the day when genial, lethargic Pappa Joffre launched his first big offensive in Champagne after the best part of a year's philosophic “nibbling.”

“I nibble,” the odd old fellow used to say when invited by distinguished visitors at Chantilly to give an inkling of his strategy—since, after all, others were involved by this also. In the present instance, had not Sir John French undertaken frontally to assault (and with many of the matchless First Hundred Thousand) the mining area before Lens, as the northern or left end of Joffre's almost mythological “pincers”?

Most things that could have, went wrong with that first French offensive in Champagne. The attack was strung out over too wide a frontage, and not pressed sufficiently in depth at any one point. The strength of the German position on the high ground had been under-estimated. Barrages were primitive. The enemy had long known where the blow was coming, and although his wire was hardly touched, the blind de Grand-

maison school of "toujours à l'assaut!" was allowed to persist through the battle, piling up France's first and best.

I recollect it all fairly well, having had to put into staff prose, some days later in the North, the apologia of the principal French general involved. Under the style of "Lessons of the Champagne Offensive," he had compiled forty typewritten pages about miscalculations which cost our Allies (although this was not mentioned) 25,000 dead on the first day and 60,000 all told before the Grand Quartier decided to call off the attempted local nibble.

However, though defeated, the French took what for those days was a large number of prisoners, and a number of wire "cages" had been run up to receive these captives at various points on the rolling plain leading back to Chalons. Such a prisoners' cage may have measured at that time 60 ft. by 30 ft. and contained three staples of furniture, a raised wooden platform surmounted by a superannuated mitrailleuse, an Intelligence officer's hutment, and certain other offices. Everything within the cage was visible through the wire from outside, and when (as sometimes occurred) the cages came to be situated close to still-inhabited centres behind the line, the captives usually had an all-day audience of gaping and japing civilians.

"Ah, les sales Boches! Attendez un peu!"

250 THE BATTLE OF BRAINS

And the encaged ones had to put up with missiles and juvenile expectoration and comments in the vein of "regards celui-là avec la tête de porc!" As for the captives, their emotions would be too mixed for them to take much notice. When they were not numbed, they were cowed, or felt elated, guilty, arrogant, all at once. Also, they were so weary and lousy and hungry and thirsty. And not a little anxious, too, since if they had had the luck to get thus far with whole skins, had not their officers told them that the French killed all prisoners whether these answered questions or not (this to hinder desertion or "pretending dead" or too easy surrender on the battle-front)?

It was into such a cage that a captured colonel of the Foot Guards was conducted at the head of a shuffling field-grey band of perhaps two hundred—all that was left of his battalion—on the morning of the second day of the offensive. The regiment was by way of being a crack one; there was a glorious September nip in the air; Poland and Galicia had just been overrun by Ludendorff and Mackensen. Also, had not their capture been "allowed for" by the General Staff as part of the price that had to be paid for holding up the French? Such factors may have contributed to the arrogant bearing of the new arrivals, some of whom did not trouble to mutter asides, but against orders spoke outright.

"Hopefully we shall go to the south—where the sun is!"

"Hans's head was blown off."

"Officers and N.C.O.'s in the top right-hand corner! Soldiers over there to the left!" a French sergeant kept shouting in German as the newcomers filed into the cage. To rasp out words of command in German, and in the approved barking style—that was one of the things calculated to make prisoners "sit up." To bellow at them in their own tongue as they had grown used to being bellowed at.

"You will empty everything in your pockets—*everything*—into the corporal's sack!" roared a subaltern of the Service de Renseignement, with all the guttural roar twenty years could develop. Aside to the corporal, the young officer ordered: "You will then take it across to Lieutenant Blanchard. He's in the hut still busy with the last lot. While you're collecting, I'll run over the Boches and pick out likely ones."

Achtung!

Feeling fierce, the all-powerful French youth passed along the line of captured Foot Guards. "Sie! Sie! Sie! Sie! Sie!" he picked out in rapid succession, beckoning his selections to fall out, the while the prisoners as a whole reluctantly tipped their letters, post-cards, photographs, trinkets, wallets, diaries, into the circulating sack. Picking out at sight prisoners likely to answer the first pressing list of perhaps a dozen

questions—put while battle operations were still actively in progress—was an art in itself, since here facing one would as likely as not be a hotch-potch of all types in the social ladder, from counts to coal-heavers, and all equally dirty and sweaty and unshaven. It was a bit of a gamble inasmuch as some ninety per cent of the captives would have to be arbitrarily herded to one side, for rapid concentration to be made upon the remaining chosen tenth, but it had to be done. For the essence of this cage-work was speed in getting off information to Army H.Q. (if strategical in nature), to corps, divisions, and brigades (if tactical). With every minute's delay the information decreased in value. There your properly functioning Intelligence officer would sit, at trestle-table in a hutment in no way cut off from the noisy *va-et-vient* without, breaking off this and that examination of a prisoner to rush through a priority wire to some headquarters on the strength of a fresh and vital point gleaned in interrogation.

One minute a prisoner—either off his guard, dull-witted, or “willing”—would reveal the position of an ammunition dump; the next, a wire was being scribbled out direct to the air people involved, inviting them to go and bomb it. A Feldgrau would mention a pal of his, in regiment number so-and-so at Rethel. A swift consultation of file or map would show such a location to be abnormal, and off would go a

priority wire to that effect. The slightest chance remark, and one that would have held no significance whatever for the untrained, or indeed for such as were not intimately versed in the organisation and expansion of the German forces and in their tactical and strategical situation, might mean the difference between success and defeat—as it also might mean the saving of hundreds of lives, as when a prisoner would blurt out that his regiment, in the event of a retirement, was to hold such-and-such a cross-roads in force. On such an occasion off would go an “urgent priority clear the line” wire right through to the brigade attacking in that sector so that they could take quite new dispositions for approaching that cross-roads.

In a battle cage one simply had to take what luck gave, work like the devil, and bank on one’s wits. Without doubt, through indiscriminate “postponing,” through wholesale chucking on one side of dud-looking prisoners, one missed a lot. On the other hand, to have taken on all was a manifest impossibility—with one’s wrist-watch ever before one, and the battle still proceeding. With that battle and its developments, cage examining officers were exclusively concerned. Time enough later, and to spare, for “frilling,” for cunningly staged questioning covering all the ground from the state of feminine morale in Pomerania to the physical effects of eating dachshunds. Time enough,

then, also, for the special "stunting" of the craft, for the graduations of treatment ranging from bullying to cajolery.

Just at present our young French Intelligence officer was bent upon getting immediate results. Nor was his task the easier for his having to accommodate himself to the varying types—braggart, liar, cute, tough. Or the resultant battle of brains enacted at top speed, rendered the less complex by frequent cross-currents introduced from without—such as when a copy of a freshly captured document of importance would arrive by special dispatch-rider with orders that every prisoner was to be re-examined on it; or when wires would pour in from other cage officers giving the purport of *their* examinations; sometimes making it imperative for one to sort out again such-and-such a prisoner from all that herd of scowling Germans squatting round, remembering that he had "said something about it."

Such, then, was the milieu in which Lieutenant Dagneux, Service de Renseignement, found himself that nippy September morn some kilometres behind the line in Champagne, spurred to effort by realisation of the complete upper hand he held over the loathed and detested Boche, who had raped and ruined his way almost up to the walls of Paris.

"Achtung, cursed fellow!" he bawled anew each time a prisoner was brought before him

between two poilus with fixed bayonets. He also—each time anew—would fling down his revolver beside him on the trestle table and proceed to rap out the questions of urgency, all bearing on the battle still proceeding.

“Who are in support?” “Show me on the map!” “And who are in reserve?” “Heard anything about gas?” “What artillery units have you seen?” “Expecting reinforcements?” “Where from?” “When?”

“You’re lying!” shouted the young Frenchman at one prisoner. “You can’t possibly have seen the Tenth Jaeger at Mons last week! They’re at Warsaw!” And, turning to his sergeant, and purposely employing a German roar that could be heard without, the youth commanded: “Sergeant, no water for this swine for three days! They think we know nothing about their damned army, these Boches! The next one who lies to me will be shot!”

And so, examination upon examination ensued, to clicking of heels and right-about turns. Yet somehow things were not going well that morning. The Boches weren’t answering as usual; seemed somehow curiously *prepared*. Young Dagneux frowned. “Drôle” was what he said. But it wasn’t a bit droll, really. He would go out and look the dirty beasts over once more.

At the door he collided with an escort bringing in a German Unteroffizier, bull-necked, and with scrubby battle-beard.

"Et puis?"

"Caught warning the unexamined ones of the questions you're asking, mon Lieutenant. You examined him one of the first."

With indrawn whistle, as much as to say: "*So that's* the way it is, eh?" the examining officer glared ominously into the eyes of the man who had queered his pitch. Then, in German: "Anything to say?"

"Nichts."

"Take him outside! Put me through to the Commandant de la Place!"

The telephone circuits of war worked with wondrous celerity. In less than a minute Dagneux was saying: "That you, mon Commandant? Here Dagneux, Cage 3. Yes. I'm sending a Boche Unteroffizier over to you. Gravest case. Caught warning others of my questions."

Nevertheless, it was a worried Intelligence officer who now sat in his hut. The damage had been already done. He had got practically nothing of importance. And he had finished with the selected men. Officers' turn now. And they never said anything.

"I'll take the Boche officers now," the disgruntled youth threw to his orderly. "How many are there? Five? All right. The colonel last."

But it turned out as usual, and just as the

young Frenchman had foreseen. At the very first question, each German officer drew himself up and made the deadly return: "Were you in my position, would you answer?" So that it was a thoroughly exasperated Dagneux that faced Colonel von Fuentler, Fourth Foot Guards, when this monocled and waisted Junker, haughty of chin and gait, was finally brought into the hut.

"Oberst von Fuentler, vierte Guard zu Fuss!" announced the newcomer before a word had been uttered.

"Ta guele, vieux chameau!" said France.

"I say absolutely nothing to you but this," went on the former imperturbably, "that in threatening us you are violating the Hague Con. . . ."

"Thousand - thunders - of - God - sacred - head - of - a - Boche!" crashed young France, hurling back his chair and springing up. "Who the hell asked you to open your filthy jaw? So that's how you think you can talk to the Franzosen, eh? What do you think would happen to a captured French officer if he dared to do the same? I'll teach you . . ."

"It is all one to me."

"Is it? We'll see about that! Sergeant! Number One for this braggart! Have him stripped and sent in among his men!" Then, swinging abruptly back from French to German: "Go on! Out! The Junkers are all uniform!

Let's see you without it! *Ha! Ha! Ha!*
Out! Get out or I'll kick you out!"

Yet it wasn't really a kicking subaltern, but rather a defeated youth, who fell back into his chair with a final "nom de Dieu!" as the door closed.

Colonel von Fuentler was duly stripped nude and put back in among his men. He retained, however, his monocle, rings, identity disc, cigarette-case and wrist-watch. That had been a whim of young Dagneux. "Leave him his jewellery," the latter had ordained. "It will make him look all the more ridiculous."

Only once before had Dagneux gone to this extreme measure with an officer prisoner, and how that proud Prussian had crumpled up! Came to him after less than an hour of nude and public degradation and implored to be given back his clothes. Anything but the leers and lewdness that his nudity provoked among his fellow-prisoners, to say nothing of the staring ribaldry of the locals gathered without!

"Yes, a pretty effective form of punishment," Dagneux agreed with himself as he strolled over to the mess for lunch. "They can stand anything but Number One. Gets them somewhere deep down. See how the Junker feels this afternoon!"

Yet when Lieutenant Dagneux returned to take up the business of his cage again, it was not

at all a crestfallen colonel that he beheld. Far from being sunk away in some corner, ashamed to face his fellow-men—morale, everything, gone phut—there was the sacred Boche strolling up and down in the hot sunlight, for all the world as though he were on the sands of some fashionable plage! The same swagger, the same cigarette gesture of ash-flicking with the little finger, the same periodic fixing of the monocle more securely in the eye. The others had even respectfully left a lane for him to parade back and forth, showing off his bodily charms! Yes, that was what it looked like: as if the fellow knew he had a fine figure and was revelling in this utterly unexpected opportunity of impressing all and sundry with the fact!

“*Quel esprit de corps tout-de-même!*” the young Frenchman could not help punning, as presently the other officers clicked heels before their naked C.O. “Still, we’ll see! Late September evenings can be deuced cold in the nude!” With which reflection, Dagneux decided to get on with his general report.

Meanwhile the Herr Oberst was waving aside the expressions of indignation and outrage as uttered by his juniors.

“This is nothing to me, nothing at all . . . that is, gentlemen officers, if it doesn’t incommode you? Just a loin-cloth less than in German East! What is that? I even have my wrist-watch, as you see,” the colonel went on,

re-adjusting his eyeglass and smiling round, "and, moreover, it is going to be very useful presently. Listen. We are doubtless being observed, so I continue to grin. I overheard two Franzosen talking as they were stripping me. Their Army Commander is motoring by here—just on that road there—at three this afternoon. He is coming from Chalons, so we shall see the cars long beforehand on the crest—perhaps five minutes beforehand. And he is bringing a group of American military observers with him. See that the men are told that when I give an order, they are immediately to obey it—without a moment's hesitation, and no matter what it is. You can start passing the word round now. But take great care."

"Sorry to have to wake so many of them up," added the Herr Oberst, glancing round at the recumbent and unshod forms of what was left of his battalion.

Soon there were nudgings and whisperings round the cage, and stretchings and yawns. But it needed more than that to rouse the attention of the few poilu guards about, themselves in a semi-somnolent state, for it was the heat of the day. As for the Colonel, still impeccably Potsdam, he had strode leisurely over to a corner of the cage where there was a mound. The long, straight Napoleon road from Chalons could be surveyed for kilometres from that mound.

Five minutes more and they should be in sight, reckoned the nude observer.

The nudgings and yawnings had ceased; the Germans awaited their word of command.

But certainly no one paid heed when suddenly there appeared a cloud of dust on the Chalons road—nobody, that is, save the German colonel. “One, two, three, four,” he counted. “Five cars—yes, this must be they.”

“Field-greys”—he turned and faced the cage—“strip! Naked every one of you! This instant!”

Dazed, not knowing what it was all about, but like automata, the Field-greys proceeded to obey. Probably medical inspection. Or delousing. Or . . .

At any rate, whatever, was “up,” there they stood inside of a minute or so like the well-trained soldiers they were, stripped beside their scattered garments.

A whole cageful of naked Germans!

For all to see on a September afternoon!

For any passing motor-car parties to see . . .

“Stop, stop!” cried the French General from the back of his car. “What in heaven’s name have we here? Where’s the officer on duty? Fetch him at once! A disgrace! And with these neutral officers, too!”

“Looks as if a consignment of B.D.V.’s wouldn’t go amiss round here,” mused an American colonel, getting out of a car and

approaching the phenomenon.

Meanwhile a bewildered Intelligence officer was saluting and fumbling for explanations. "A misunderstanding, my General, a . . ."

"We are naked because we refused to answer questions under the Hague Convention," clearly announced a German-toned voice, in English.

"What does one say? What does one say?" rapped out the French Commander.

"Better be getting along, my General," whispered an A.D.C., "or these Americans may . . ."

"Quite so, quite so. But a full report from this officer to-morrow morning! And their clothes back at once!"

"Golly!" ejaculated the American colonel who had gone forward to peer through the wire, "if it isn't old Fuentler! Well, I'll be darned!"

"At your service, Colonel." The German bowed stiffly.

"Queer business, what you say . . . hell, cars going . . . guess, though, I'll let the family know I've seen you."

"Almost as at Wahnsee," bowed the nude Junker.

THE RED CURVE

Nor a doubt about it—the Red Curve was the show exhibit in Northern France. For one thing, it leapt so to the eye. And it told such a story. So concisely, so pithily, that the veriest tyro among politicians or distinguished visitors to the Front could grasp its message. Yes, one had but to glance at it—there, where it adorned the office wall of its busy and imaginative inspirer—for the War to crystallise, for the labyrinthine perplexities of the hour to appear to resolve themselves into the one dominant question this scarlet graph posed, and purported to answer, namely, the problem of enemy man-power. How long could things last out?

Man-power! How expressions, coined of their time, fade out, have their day. To think that this forgotten and interred example once loomed larger in the life of England than all the eloquence of popes and presidents, that it crept into every home, taking, taking, that neither orator or leader-writer could get through with their tasks without mention of it. Man-power. Was it not, in the last analysis, by that and that alone that the War could, would, be won or lost? Even so exploring a mind as a Repington's could see no other way. "And so

to the Tribunal " (in his Pepysian variation).

The Red Curve, though, was no domestic affair. Rather had it to do essentially with Germans and Austrians—at what rate these were being called up and killed off (Bulgars and Turks didn't count much, were being too fully contained in other theatres to influence matters). So that the colour of the thing, seeing that it dealt exclusively in blood, was appropriate enough. Of the manifold manifestations and rummagings of the smothered war waged under the sign of "I," it was generally conceded that this wavering red line, as calculated and projected daily by a specially qualified officer, afforded the accepted *pièce of résistance*.

Not that this graph of death had always been the veritable oracle that it came to be regarded in the dark midway of the War in France. Its beginnings were small and unsensational. Someone, early on, began recording in graph form the progressive summoning to the colours of Central Power reserves. By a penetrating knowledge of the enemy's military system, by much intricate deduction from his casualty lists, by spies' reports and the examination of captured documents and prisoners, one was able to trace a line showing that so-and-so many tens of thousands had been called up the preceding month, that so many hundreds of thousands remained in the depots, how much the enemy was or was not drawing on the future in regard

to his man-power. But the graph of those early days of high anticipation was hardly a paraded exhibit: rather a somewhat academic keeping pace with events, which might one day assume considerable importance.

It was during the Battle of the Somme that the Red Curve first began to assume this higher status. That five months of instructive slaughter, of generals learning how to handle the amateur flower of a nation, led as is known, to a profound change of strategical conception regarding the future course of the fighting. There could now no longer be any question of a general break-through—at least, not for a long time to come. Trench systems had grown too unassailable, and the necessary many days' preliminary bombardment banished any chance of surprise. Rather was the stage now set for a war of attrition, of "killing Germans," of slow and costly wearing down of the foe. And, obviously enough, the Red Curve became the symbol of this war of attrition, since by consulting it from week to week one was able at a glance to tell just how the scales were turning. It is not too much to say that in 1916-17 consultation of the Red Curve formed *the* prelude to battle in the West; and that much comfort was derived from a graph which was continually causing to stand out in bolder relief the claim that the enemy's reserves were dwindling, and that he was eating up his younger recruits ahead

of schedule time in order to withstand the onslaughts of Picardy and Flanders.

At each sign of restlessness among the politicians at the frightful losses being entailed by Red Curve strategy or at discussion of the bankruptcy of military capacity that this indicated, there would come reassuringly from the vicinity of the Curve:

"But don't you see that if we go on long enough we are mathematically bound to win? Look at this. At the present rate he will have called up his last available recruit on the . . ." And then would follow a date when (it was confidently predicted) the enemy would cave in for paucity of reserves.

In another and higher sanctum, a more modest yet equally definite acceptance of the situation would be voiced:

"If we are going to win in 1918 or 1919 we have got to keep pegging away now—wearing him down. Otherwise he'll still be too strong."

Yes, those were great days—in 1916-17—for the Red Curve and for its sponsors. People, from the highest officer down, came to consult it almost as an oracle. Distinguished visitors, come to doubt, would stay to marvel—for the Keeper of the Curve had a way with him, could put his goods in the window like few. Even a prominent and doubting peer returned to England convinced that we were on the right road on the Western Front. Plain as a pikestaff, the

Red Curve had told him so, had as good as indicated the month, still somewhat distant it was true, when hostilities might be expected to cease. Steadily, week after week, the red line was descending, descending as the Central Powers used up their reserves. Not too far ahead there must come a day when it would touch gorgeous zero in the matter of further manpower available. And then, heigh-ho, for a swift winding up! The noble doubter had even been initiated into how the thing was done—had watched an actual filling-in of the Red Curve and held in his hand a day's sample of the very evidence which went to form it. True, this evidence—an agent's report from Koenigsberg intimating that 123 students at the local University had recently been called up—was double Dutch to him, yet he did not doubt the Keeper of the Curve when informed that this apparent trifle showed the Bezirk in question to be denuded of recruits by seventy thousand more than was supposed. The visitor merely asked what a Bezirk was.

On the other hand, in juvenile and therefore gagged circles, the Red Curve never, at any time, drew unquestioning support—and what faith such junior officers of the branch did have in it lapsed sadly as Arras merged into Passchendaele, and the enemy showed scant signs indeed of being hard put to it in the matter of holding his own.

"The trouble with the 'U-boat,'" these officers would agree in conversation, "is that he's too bally optimistic." ("The U-Boat" or "the greatest peril to the Empire" was the nickname jocularly bestowed on a certain officer not wholly unconnected with the fortunes of the Red Curve). Yet this scepticism within the branch was, of necessity, but a smothered affair, ventilated only by junior officers meeting haphazardly, when they would ask such idiotic questions as "Why don't they go in for surprise and cut out all this attrition buncombe? They seem to think that surprise is absolutely and permanently out of the question. Why? The Germans are simply contracting and contracting into pill-boxes and pouring and pouring out machine-guns. It isn't a question of man-to-man power at all." And various possible ways of reintroducing surprise would be debated.

But it was French ridicule which first led to the Red Curve being seriously challenged. "Mais c'est rigolo tout-de-même chez les Anglais," they would jest. "Ils ont une machine pour prédire la fin de la guerre. Mais oui, mon cher, le jour même! Lorseq qu'il n'y aura plus d'ennemi! Vas-y, voir!"

Now, these Allies had small reason to be proud of much of their war-waging and staff work, yet in the matter of our "killing Germans" (and ourselves at almost double the rate) they rendered a genuine service by

stating the case with such painful logic to a certain distinguished visiting Briton that the latter forthwith repaired to the very highest quarters at home and indicted scathingly the continuance of Red Curve strategy. What were his exact words? One does not profess to know. But their purport may fairly safely be compressed as follows:

“Why don’t we keep a graph of our own losses beside this one of alleged enemy manpower decline? In fifteen months we’ve had over a million and a half casualties in France. As we were not engaged in battle for six months, this works out at an average wastage of six battalions *a day* during active operations which lasted *two hundred and eighty days*. The enemy has lost nothing like that. Here we are, banking on a graph that is openly doubted, pretending to wear down Germany when America has only got one battalion in line, when France has retired from active participation since the mutinies, and when Italy has been put clean out of action for months to come! And we propose to go on slogging away “ending the war” by sacrificing two of ours for every one of theirs! This graph is the most demoralising, deadening, misleading contraption that has ever cursed a headquarters!”

It was Passchendaele time—towards the summation of that incredible calvary covered by the word “doggedness”—and the Red Curve

became relegated to a lesser sphere while the "U-boat" was sunk.

Years afterwards an ex-Intelligence officer sat opposite a great German soldier in the latter's silvan retreat far from the growling mob. He who had once played chess with millions of his kind was now in eclipse, yet it struck one as being not such a bad sort of eclipse—this charming villa looking down on the old German city. And there was a small son, aged three, for the fallen demi-god to romp with, and a Hausfrau who patently had the three celebrated domestic "K's" at her finger-tips. Alone, snarling wolf-hounds, ever on guard, served as a reminder that 'neath the outward calm of this typical Teuton home lurked violence—the violence of this baulked Prussian and the would-be violence of hosts of others towards him.

For a while the great soldier paced to and fro, rapping out words of hatred of England, "whose colonies won't come to her aid next time," and of contempt for the United States "which came in from the worst motive in the history of war—for pure gold." For the one-time Allied officer this storming was good enough hearing, but it was as nothing compared to the interest awakened when the Martian lecturer, upon learning of the nature of his visitor's war service, passed to a criticism of Allied Intelligence in the field.

"The most inexplicable factor of the Western War," decreed this military genius, "will remain how and why both sides threw over the idea of effecting surprise in attack so early on. It was clearly the only way to a solution from stationary conditions. Directly I got my hand firmly on things in the West I saw that. And I acted accordingly. Where can you show me such a surprise as Michael of March 21? The Tanks at Cambrai? Yes, but that was just as great a surprise for you as it was for us! Or take the Chemin des Dames on May 27. If you English didn't know precisely where I was going to strike with Michael, the French didn't know that I was going to strike at all!

"I did this by creating Security Officers whose sole business it was to observe our preparations for attack and to warn us when we were giving away our battle intentions by such preparations. In this way we managed to scale down everything so much to the normal that you were mystified because the picture was so even all the way up and down the line. You did the same thing later. But I did it first. And in surprise lay victory, had . . ."

". . . Had you had enough reserves?" interjected the visitor, who was itching to broach the matter of the Red Curve.

"But, what!" (the great soldier wheeled in his stride and stamped). "Lack of reserves didn't lose Germany the war! We knew how

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you were depending on your famous graph, and we used to see, as far as we were able, that you got the confirmatory information your High Command desired, to justify its uninspired war-making. I even saw that casualty lists were cooked. No! With smaller, more mobile and ever more powerfully armed divisions, we had enough men to hold the Antwerp-Meuse line for a year, or perhaps for two. What beat us was your dropping lies from the clouds, your infamous blockade of babies, and our Jews undermining the State. As for your battle-making by graph, it isn't to be found, and it never will be found, in the fine story of war. A graph was necessary, but it never should have predominated!"

AUNTIE'S LOAF

THE Operations branch at German Army Headquarters in the Prefecture at Blank bore an unwonted air that morning. Instead of the usual routine functioning amid grumpy monosyllables, the few staff officers who had achieved this holy of holies were poring over copies of a longish document marked emphatically in red "Strengst geheim," and keenly debating its contents from table to desk across the large room as they read on. The Army Commander himself was present and, like the others, halted now and then in his perusal of the very secret document to discuss some point or another raised therein. And well he might. For what else were the five-and-twenty paragraphs before him—signed Ludendorff—than a resumé of the experience just gained from the Battle of Arras and from Nivelle's disastrous onslaught simultaneously further south? Here, verily, was the very stuff of war, the true scholarship of the art, this incisive editing by the High Army Command of the principal lessons to be assimilated . . . a concrete step forward, in every sense, in the conduct of operations.

What an occasion for the professionals of war! A hundred staff courses, a thousand

manuals, paled beside the feel of this pulsating compilation derived from the recent deaths of a hundred thousand men. No academic Clausewitz argument this, but the communication by Germany's most brilliant soldier, of his very latest and most urgent battle conceptions, for their future application. A master touch clarified, crystallised every aspect of the holocaust—

Sufficient attention was not paid to rendering all works as invisible as possible to ground and air observation. Screens and dummy works must be employed on a considerably larger scale than hitherto.

Continuous fire trenches and communication trenches and good entanglements and dug-outs alone enable a position to be permanently held both in position warfare and in battle. The strength of the position must increase from front to rear. The front lines will be advanced positions and special value should not therefore be attached to the retention of ground.

It is now demonstrated once for all that the positions selected for the machine-guns and the dug-outs must form the framework of all infantry battle positions. Deep dug-outs forward are man-traps, and are to be destroyed.

The importance of villages has been exaggerated. They serve to quarter troops

in quiet periods, but they are too good targets in the battle, and should be omitted from the defensive scheme.

Defences must not be constructed during the battle; they demand too much labour and casualties. The effort will be to connect the shell-holes by trenches. But after the battle has subsided the second or rearward position will be selected for the new front line.

The principle of allotting a weak garrison to the front line, distributing the machine-guns in depth and chequer-wise behind the line, detailing emergency garrisons, especially at sector boundaries, and providing protection for the machine-gun nests, has been shown to be correct.

An active defence should be carried out in the spirit of an offensive. But there are few points on the ground which must actually be held at all costs. The morale of the troops will never be lowered by a voluntary withdrawal at the right time if the men are acquainted with the reason. The obstinate retention of positions must destroy their confidence in their commanders.

Greater adaptability on the part of the troops during the battle has also shown itself to be imperative. The casualties sustained if the men are lying in shell-holes or in the open, so long as the fact has not been observed, are usually considerably less than if the troops

remain in positions known to the enemy. Infantry will therefore often do better to engage the enemy in the open, taking cover in craters, and should use the trenches only to live in or find protection from the weather. On the other hand, men lying by themselves in shell-holes are particularly susceptible to a strong feeling of isolation, which weakens their power of resistance. Repeated efforts must therefore be made to establish connection inconspicuously from crater to crater. Groups of stout-hearted men should be detailed for this, and they should be given preference in the way of decorations, leave, etc.

Our men must not simply sit still and let the enemy shell them. On the contrary, they must be as active as possible themselves and use their heads and take the offensive against the enemy. If limited withdrawals are allowable, it must be made perfectly clear to all ranks that each unit must maintain intact the general ground entrusted to it, and that evacuation can only be carried out by order of the High Command. The offensive defensive, the immediate and independent counter-offensive must become second nature to every man and every commander. It plays the decisive rôle in defence. Where it fails, only a methodical counter-attack, after days of instruction, should be substituted.

Our artillery fire is altogether too rigid. It

must be rendered flexible if methodical annihilating fire is to fulfil its purpose.

The troops must learn to co-operate with aeroplanes and balloons. The tedious and exhausting, but decisive work of contact patrols and artillery aeroplanes has yielded performances of great merit.

The paper war is getting beyond all bounds. One artillery unit received and filed forty communications a day during the recent battle. The fighting must suffer from such a system.

The Army Commander broke off, slapped his thigh, and laughed outright as he read this last paragraph. "Krauss, that's one for you about the paper war!" he jollied. "The fellow thinks of everything!" But then the General grew serious, and asked: "What's the distribution to be?"

"One to each Corps—five; one each to the Army Commander, Operations, Intelligence, and Aviation. Total, nine. One spare copy left over."

"Look well after it, Colonel. We don't want them coming down on us again for a leakage. Of course, it's all nonsense—still, they *do* seem to have made up their minds that it's this headquarters. And what the English would give for this!"

Five days later it was Corporal Edgar's turn

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of night duty in the *Nachrichtung* or Intelligence room. The N.C.O. confidential clerks of this branch worked on a roster, but very seldom—except during active operations—was there occasion to rouse the duty officer sleeping in an adjacent hutment. Except for his English name and the fact of his grandfather having been a naturalised German, Corporal Edgar was in every respect a sound son of the Fatherland. A most useful N.C.O. with a capital knowledge of English. True enough, there had been talk about his name at one time, but his antecedents were so spotless. As clerk to the head of "I," he was fully trusted and given access to things marked "secret"—indeed, not a few items of these files and documents he had himself taken down in shorthand and later typed.

Corporal Edgar now moved towards the drawer containing these secret documents, unlocked it with the duty officer's key (regularly handed to the N.C.O. of the night who occasionally had need of it while beguiling the long hours with work), and quietly abstracted the most recent acquisition—a six-page printed affair marked in red "*Strengst geheim.*" In the stillness of midnight, each rustle of paper, each jingle of keys, echoed in the empty room, and instinctively the Corporal half-turned and glanced about him; but there was really no danger. No one ever looked in at that time. Still, to offset any such possibility the Corporal

next took the precaution of retiring behind a screen where there was a camp-bed for the use of the night watch, and here by the added light of his torch he spent the next two hours transcribing a copy in English and at his leisure of the printed affair marked "Strengst geheim." The two hours were necessary because the translation had to be made minisculely and indelibly on to what was little more than tissue paper—several sheets of which could be crumpled up into an insignificant ball.

By 2 a.m. the Corporal had completed his task and was sleeping the sleep of a just German, his flimsy sheets concealed in the lining of his tunic and the strictly secret document safely back in its lawful place.

"Quand pouvez vous partir la prochaine fois?"

Corporal Edgar, spick and span in his town field-grey, shot the question out of the corner of his mouth at the middle-aged Frenchman who had sidled up in the obscure little estaminet behind the Grande Place. The midday apéritif hour had gone by and the café was nearly empty. When it had previously been filled, Corporal Edgar had held forth in loudest and most truculent German, had chucked the daughter of the house under the chin and made himself otherwise Teutonically heavy.

"Pas avant deux jours."

“Bon. Voici. Urgent. Très important.”

And Corporal Edgar strode from the estaminet leaving the middle-aged Frenchman holding a crumpled paper ball in one hand.

The firm of Bonhomme et Cie, textile manufacturers of Roubaix, was well known. Jacques Degrange was its principal traveller, and about once every two weeks the Germans permitted him to make the journey to Brussels—by road, because he had his own car and the firm was in good odour. None the less at each passage of the frontier into Belgium Degrange and his car would be submitted to the most rigorous search.

On the morning of his next departure Jacques Degrange rose earlier than usual and repaired to his garage. Here he lay down on his back under the rear of the car, unwound a roll of fireproof binding from the exhaust-pipe, inserted several sheets of “flimsy” in the binding, and re-wound it round the pipe. He then cleaned himself up and took the steering-wheel for the frontier.

Arrived there, all went well. Himself, his clothes, and the inside of the car were duly turned upside down by the frontier guard, but the exhaust continued merrily to expel its fumes, and soon Jacques Degrange was on his way to Brussels, a weight lifted temporarily from his mind. But only temporarily. In the suburb of Schaerbeek he had to risk getting down and abstracting the tissue paper, since

this could never be done in a public garage.

If he were caught after that . . . with the thing in his wallet!

But the lonely motorist, fortunately for him, had no time to spare for such terrifying "ifs." Very shortly after, he had drawn up outside the shop of Van der Biene, baker.

"Three croissants, please," he said, flinging down a coin on the counter. There was only one other customer in the shop, a woman, and quickly she was gone. "And this, mon cher," went on the newcomer, "is very important."

"It shall be on its way to-morrow," nodded the baker, picking up what had now become a ball once more, and thrusting it into his pocket. "Bonjour, Monsieur Degrange. Bon appétit."

The early morning tram-car to Malines was, as usual, crowded with workers—men and women bound for factory, field or market. There were German soldiers, too, returning raucous and beer-smelling from a Brussels joy-night. Little Pauline Van der Biene, basket in arm and tucked away in a corner, was a very inconspicuous little passenger indeed. In fact, the biggest thing about her was a wide, round loaf of bread which at one stage caused a neighbouring Field-grey to burble in foulest French "Tonny Pan peteet! Bo koo hungrig!" But that only caused the "peteet" to hug her loaf more closely to her.

At Malines, Pauline got down and took the street leading to the canal. Her aunt, as the wife of the master, lived on board one of the barges which did the service to Holland, and it was to her that Pauline periodically came with baskets of extra food those lean times. Nor would her welcome ever be other than of the most breezy and cordial, for Auntie had a vast expanse of frame to nourish, and felt the pinch more than most. It was so again now.

"Tiens, la petite Pauline!" came with waving from the deck. "A la bonheur!"

And Pauline was petted and given chocolate. And if one or two deck-hands were about, perhaps within earshot, they certainly never heard her whisper to Auntie "Là-dedans!" as she handed over the loaf with the other comestibles.

Barges are notoriously slack movers, and it was not until three days later that the barge that interests us completed its fifty or sixty miles glide to the Dutch frontier. Here a most rigid examination always took place of everything and everybody on board. Sometimes this examination even required the presence of everybody up in the Commandant's headquarters where both sexes, and even children, would be stripped naked and subjected to very intimate search indeed. Such was the order now, and it caused the master's wife to abuse the cursed German

sergeant who gave it, for she was in the middle of cooking the dinner. Not many Belgians could permit themselves the luxury of such outbursts, but Auntie was something of a character. And she made such succulent stew.

"Very well, old woman," bargained the German N.C.O., "if you shut your jaw and give me a plate of that stew you needn't go up with the others. Anyway, they know your fat old corpse well enough by now!" And suiting action to words, the Field-grey drew up a kitchen chair, seized an adjacent loaf of bread—and prepared to break it.

"*You great pig!*" roared Auntie, "*give me that bread at once, or I'll dash your brains out with this pan!*"

For a second, her heart thumping madly, the master's wife could utter no more. But then she found that she was grasping the loaf to her side, and that the German had risen and was staring at her with wide-open eyes. And the sight gave Auntie back her aplomb. "*I'll teach you to grab things in my kitchen!*" she forced at the top of her voice. "*Get out! I'll come up and be examined with the rest!*"

But on the gangway, and the danger over, the good soul reflected that it wasn't policy to alienate the "great pig"—or, for that matter, any German.

"Well, perhaps I'll forgive you this time," she called out. "You may come back and have

your stew. But, mind, don't ever touch anything in my kitchen again!"

After a further three days the barge was safely tied up at Rotterdam.

"I'm going ashore now, *la mère*," announced the master.

By way of answer, Auntie carefully broke open a very stale loaf, prodded about a little, and withdrew a damp and discoloured ball of flimsy paper.

"To think what we risk for this," exclaimed the master, tossing the relic up in his hand. "I've half a mind to stop doing it!"

"And I've a whole mind to go on, great coward! It's the least we can do. Run along—and don't get tipsy before you see him."

"Him" turned out to be an inconspicuous Englishman who made a point of looking in on a certain marine café on the quay every evening towards six o'clock. Sometimes he would sit down and order a whisky, but more often he would just stroll round and out again. This was what he now did on seeing his barge-master seated in one corner. And presently the barge-master followed him out on to the quay, where there ensued a few rapidly spoken words and an exchange of paper, to wit, of a hundred florins for a paper ball. And that was all—the two quickly separating in the darkness.

In his hotel room the young Englishman

straightened out the flimsy sheets and concentrated on them for a while through a magnifying glass. Then he whistled softly, rose, and folded them away in his wallet. "A telegram indicated at once, I think," he decided, reaching for his hat.

At the post-office the wire he wrote bore a London private address, and read innocuously:

Expect you ten to-morrow night.

Love, Jack.

Following which the young Englishman returned to his hotel and spent the balance of the evening making several carbon copies, for safety, of Ludendorff's latest battle conceptions.

At a deserted part of the Dutch coast, a car pulled up, and a young man got out and scanned the sea. "Damn it," he reflected, "I forgot it was still light at ten. Have to wait an hour or two, I suppose."

Actually, he had to wait longer. The Dutch coast was a tricky place just then, when appointments could not be kept to the hour, and it was not till near midnight that a jaded watcher, his eyes smarting from the strain, perceived two fleeting flashes not far out. Presently there succeeded the rhythm of a muffled motor coming nearer. Then a naval officer waded ashore.

"Sorry we're late," came cheerily. "Mines and things. Where's the deathless prose?"

"The deathless prose is here—here, take it—and it's about the most deathless you'll ever get on this stunt. Thanks, and so long."

And the young Englishman regained his car and headed back for Rotterdam. And a naval pinnacle put about and headed back towards a waiting destroyer.

This destroyer then proceeded to make top speed for Boulogne, on the quayside of which port a staff officer from G.H.Q., Vauxhall complete, was waiting by appointment. And once again Corporal Edgar's transcript changed hands.

"By Jove!" pronounced the famous general, "but this is interesting."

He never got excited; "By Jove!" was the utmost.

Lovely clean copies of the document had been made, and it was all plain reading. Indeed, all the inner circle at headquarters were reading it that night.

"How did we get it?" inquired the great soldier.

For answer, the officer concerned produced some crumpled flimsy sheets. "Here's the original, sir. Good work somewhere. Never had anything through before so quickly from this source. I can't exactly explain all its peregrinations, sir, but from Rotterdam onwards . . ."

THE LADIES OF VILLERS

THE officer in charge of contre espionage in the new area being taken over from the French—otherwise Captain Carruthers, I (b)—tilted his chair back, pencil to lips, and contemplated the bemapped and diagrammed walls of his new den.

So now the whole thing would have to be pitched into afresh . . .

He had taken over before—but that had been within the B.E.F. area. Now this sudden transfer down from the North would require a good deal of preliminary application before he got the hang of the local civilian situation. The French contre espionage did things so differently. Still, his Allied predecessor seemed to have bequeathed full details—too blinking many judging by the files and card-indexes on view, and all of which would have to be waded through.

The newcomer fingered one of the latter within arm's reach, idly flicking back the contents. Then a "Good Lord!" escaped him, and he was reading a card setting forth that the Mademoiselle Labuire (Renée), aged 21, of the Rue Parmentier, St. Quentin, was the mother of a half-German baby born October 20th, 1915,

and that therefore when the Allies swept forward she would need to be placed under close surveillance. Such was the purpose of this particular card-index which Carruthers found had already swollen to over two hundred names for the district directly ahead, and it caused him to loll back and laugh: "Well, they do things thoroughly, our Gallic friends!"

"Reminds me," he added, shutting the drawer (which the French had labelled: "Bébés Boches"). "Corporal. Will you take this down?"

"Yes sir."

"To I (b) all three Corps. As and when we take over from the French all pros . . . women of bad character found in the new British zone are to be evacuated. Your particular attention is directed to this. Co-operation, of course, with the A.P.M. acting in conjunction with the French."

"And, Corporal," called Carruthers to a vanishing clerk, "see I'm not disturbed this morning unless it's absolutely necessary. Digging into all this junk."

"Very good, sir."

But the door hardly closed to, I (b) could not resist once more falling to contemplation of his plentifully decorated walls. A Kirschner girl had gone up here and there, but these dream children from another planet were not what

drew him—rather the maps and charts which told at a glance how things functioned and stood with regard to the surveillance of the civilian population in the Army's new area (this would add another quarter of a million to the seething and abnormal five millions already under British scrutiny, reckoned Carruthers).

Then the files . . .

Holy smoke, but how our chers Alliés collected paper! With augmenting emphasis, Carruthers counted up one and twenty separate and fat files, reading off their title as he went:

Civilian Indicators; Road Permits; Railway Permits; Intercepted Correspondence; Suspects (acute surveillance); Suspects (periodical surveillance); Suspects (casual surveillance); Alerts; Voluntary War Workers; Special Zone (arrangements for); Repatriated Refugees from Occupied Regions; Tapping of Headquarters Lines; Spreading of False Reports (Success of).

Then there were the daily black lists of persons "wanted." With a dark eye, Carruthers beheld at least six months of back daily black lists stacked high in one corner. With an even blacker look, he switched to a positively mountainous pile in a corner opposite. What in the name of Mike were they? Dossiers! Just personal dossiers of all the hundreds of

individuals his predecessor had had occasion to watch . . . the vast majority, as in the British area, probably futilely.

"Well," decided a slightly taken-aback officer of I (b), "I think the suspects will be about enough for this morning."

"'Ope as you're not hoverlooking your lunch appointment with the French orficer in Hamiens, sir," were the next words heard in that room, some three hours later.

"Great Scott, I was. Is the car there?" (Carruthers was on his feet and into his British-warm almost before his batman could answer.)

Nor would he have liked to have missed that déjeuner one little bit, for it was at his pet place—Godbert's, off the Rue des Trois Cailloux—and the talk would be shop, good, unashamed, brazen shop with his French opposite number from whom he had just taken over. It was always sound so to commune with exit-ing minds long saturated in the area one was taking over.

And so England and France saluted and clasped hands, only five minutes late, in the sort of conservatory through which one had to pass to attain the salons of the restaurant and standing decoratively about which, beside palms and things, were usually to be found war-chic mademoiselles of the glad eye for les Anglais. Also, the waitresses at Godbert's were singularly acceptable and rustling—reminiscent of stage

French maids. Carruthers noticed the fact with a thrill. But Monsieur le Capitaine Dagneux being, like all French officers, of more organized loving, bestowed his attention rather on the maître d'hôtel, who presently piloted the new arrivals through an almighty khaki crush and buzz of conversation to the far end of a red plush banquette.

One could order à la carte. One did. Rougets. Sûpreme de Volaille au Riz. Baba au Rhum. And Pommery Nature, '04.

"Champagne, toujours champagne!" deprecated France. "Pourquoi?"

"Why not? Isn't it a compliment?"

"*This beats the Carlton, eh?*" strained a wild-eyed subaltern in kilts, leaning over and prodding France in the diaphragm.

"What he say, what he say?" half gasped an horizon-blue officer through the hubbub, which was one of sheer delight . . . roars of mirth and shouts for wondrous delicacies and wines, and whoops of joy as Margot and Marcelle dodged this way and that with dishes, rather like Rugby three-quarters trying to get through.

"*Sous le tonnelle or frôle son jupon!*" sang out a linguist quoting the current furore "Madelon," and essaying vainly to suit action to words as Marcelle swerved through with a Tournedos Rossini for a beckoning brigadier. "*Collar her low down there!*"

All arms, all types were there, Guardees to

Canadians via the County regiments bearing the brunt.

It was not until things had slightly subsided that the two Allied Intelligence officers set to, in French, over coffee and liqueurs. Succinctly, the Frenchman drew a picture of contre espionage conditions in the area he had just vacated, the while England was . . . well, perhaps not *quite* all attention. Ever and anon Carruthers' gaze would stray across the salle to a table opposite, where sat a siren, actually fair to middling in looks, but appearing in Amiens, 1916, as a veritable goddess.

"Quite so, yes, umps," nodded I (b) as the French Captain spoke of a certain abbé as being the best indicator and of the vain hunt for a "Belgian" soldier who must at all hazards be traced, as he was known to be a camouflaged German spy.

"Still, you don't seem to have left any particulars of cocottes," interjected Carruthers, semi absent-mindedly, at one stage. "I've searched and searched the files."

"But, mon cher, you will find those women who are bad, dangerous, in the black list!"

"That's not what I'm saying. We've got to evacuate all the women—you know—that you allowed. They're not all necessarily dangerous."

This seemed to pique France. "Then you will address yourself to the Sanitary Service,"

observed her spokesman after a pause. And with some decision: "It is not a matter for the Deuxième Bureau, what you say. Et alors!"

"Oh, come, come," mended England, "it's merely the way our two countries look at things. Meanwhile I'm looking at that topping kid over there."

"Exactly," reasoned France. "She is for the amusement of the officers so she stays. But the poor ones up forward have got to clear out. I do not understand your logic so very English."

"Merely that we've got people—bishops and things—who think we ought to be awfully good out here. Fatten us up like turkeycocks for the slaughter, put us in such health as we never knew before, and then expect us to look the other way."

"Bishops . . . bishops? I see it not," groped a mystified Ally. "And doctors?"

"Come and let's talk to her," evaded England, pushing back the table and heading sirenwards. "She's positively lonely."

"One hundred francs—at least," appraised France—the realist. "And your bishops, sapristi!"

Having duly absorbed the gist of the French files and dossiers, Captain Carruthers spent the succeeding few days scrapping most of the system which had been in operation locally and substituting the B.E.F.'s way of keeping an eye

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on the natives and their deeds. This scrapping had to be done. For one thing, the British Intelligence police had been trained after a set formula laid down by G.H.Q., and whose guiding principles were these:—

The territory occupied by the B.E.F. in France and Flanders was divided into four main areas and a main area, in turn, consisted of some twenty police stations. A police station, for its part, surveyed eight or ten communes, each commune counting two or three thousand inhabitants. So that, in essence, the scheme came down to this: that the British zone, for contre espionage purposes, was decentralised into eight or nine hundred communes, which were continuously watched by Intelligence police employing civilian indicators having special knowledge of each commune. Nor were the latter by any means mere vulgar informers, but usually the mayor or parish priest. Nevertheless, it was an astonishingly delicate job which fell to the British police—having to keep this stern check on French and Flemings in their own countries.

“Good heavens!” as Captain Carruthers once imagined, apropos, “just think, supposing the French were helping us out against invasion and tried to exercise the same control over the inhabitants of Kent and Sussex! Stopping Farmer Giles from going to market and detaining Mrs. Giles for inquiries! Why, the Entente would go phut, phut, phut!”

. . . Such then, without further technicalities, was the work to which I (b) applied itself, before Amiens, in the days of 'sixteen.

But there was one cog which refused to rotate with the rest; and as the days went by and the local Intelligence officer involved—at Corps H.Q. at Villers—failed to effect a solution, Captain Carruthers grew increasingly vexed, both over the telephone and in writing.

The trouble concerned the evacuation from Villers-Bretonneux of a dozen undesirables of the genus referred to by the French Captain in Amiens as “the poor ones.”

There was deadlock with the French about their case.

For days Carruthers argued this way and that, pointing out that G.H.Q. simply said they *had* to go and that that was all there was to it.

But no. Morning after morning, Corps came through with the mournful tidings that the local French (who always retained a last say in such matters as the moving on of their nationals) declined to budge. In the upshot, Carruthers determined to go and beard in his lair the obstructing French officer.

“But, you see,” he stressed, “we don’t recognise these people as being a necessity like you do. They may be quite all right, but where the British Army arrives, all women of known bad character left behind by you simply *must* be

evacuated. G.H.Q. orders."

"Your A.P.M. has already told me all that. My General, he remains on his positions."

For a spell the intimate Anglo-Gallic argument waxed quite warmly. Sharp words were even exchanged.

"Bon," the French major put a term to it of a sudden. "Our great countries are not to quarrel over a dozen visited women (*et quelles pauvres filles—Dieu!*). There are still the Boches. I go and see my General once again."

While waiting, Carruthers strode the main street with the A.P.M., to whose office the pair presently returned for further confabulation.

They were still confabbing when, after the lapse of an hour or so, the Commandant reappeared; but he held up his hand as if to say, "No more talk, if you please!"

"My General says," he announced, producing a sheet of notepaper, "that if your Corps Commander will sign this, the twelve women shall be evacuated. If he refuses, they stay on. It is the last word." And he handed Carruthers a typed paragraph, reading:—

I hereby guarantee that not a hair of the heads of the respectable female population of Villers-Bretonneux will be touched by my troops.

"But that's an impossible thing to ask any

Corps Commander to sign," protested I (b).

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders.

The A.P.M. was heard to curse, as women, indubitably of a certain class, peered in through his window.

Indeed, to wind up this tale, the "poor ones" continued to look in through that window—making a zestful point of it to the A.P.M.'s spluttering rage—all through the succeeding weeks and months, as they continued to tread their camp followers' beat—until, in fact, Corps H.Q. moved forward, following up the retreat to the Hindenburg Line.

Since all I (b) could do, before French obstinacy, was to place those Magdalenes of the Forward Zone on the list for casual surveillance.

THE CARRIER

RESERVE-CAPTAIN SCHMOLTZ, nominally extra civil attaché at the German Consulate at Geneva, awaited the coming of Marguerite in the Kursaal Café of that city. He—her young Swiss friend of peace-time, Wilhelm Bauer—had written her, to Grenoble, making the appointment. As he sat over his dark Munich and cigar, the vicinity echoing to argument around the tremendous conflict but recently opened, Kaspar Schmoltz, thirty, good-looking, of striking mien, and camouflaged receiving agent in Geneva for the German Secret Service, briefly reviewed the immediate past and possibilities for the future.

How would his work during the previous twelvemonth, in neighbouring Haute-Savoie and the Isère, bear fruit?

Directly the General Staff in Berlin had decided that a wheeling through Switzerland, and consequent rolling up of the French line from the south with a passive Italy on the left flank, was not to be entirely ruled out as an alternative to the more probable move through Belgium, he had been instructed to proceed to the two French frontier departments primarily involved, and there on the spot bring all infor-

mation of the local country-side and its inhabitants up-to-date in view of a possible German overrunning of them. This was termed, in staff parlance, "putting down a plan of information on foreign territory liable to invasion."

"It may be strategically necessary to utilise Switzerland as well—you never know," was the view held in high circles. "One small neutral is much the same as another."

So off hied a light-hearted young German to charming Savoy, there to note the latest transport and living-on-the-country facilities, likely heavy battery positions, nodal points to bomb, defences, disposition of troops in barracks, and so on. A parallel commission was to select, on the strength of personal contact with character and type, a very restricted few "frontier carriers" for functioning when the trouble began—respectable local French citizens of un-noted existence who might be pressed into service as carriers of espionage material across from French Savoy into Switzerland in the much more likely event of the latter's neutrality being respected, and its frontier remaining open. It was impressed upon him that these carriers were best chosen from among people with recognised reasons for crossing the frontier fairly frequently—such as commercial travellers.

Schmoltz, to disarm suspicion, "became" Wilhelm Bauer, a young Swiss from Zurich, and thoroughly enjoyed his mission. Like all

Germans he had been bred in the cult of the "Ausflug," and his sojourn in Savoy, in 1913-14, was little more than one protracted and joyous "Ausflug," butterbrodts, rucksack and spiked stick complete. "The one real way to see a country, to study and absorb a countryside and its people," he would enthuse, "is to tramp every valley and hop every stream." The putting into practice of which did not surprise the good Savoyards in the least, cognisant as they were of their neighbours' queer passion for "le footing." This young foreigner was sympathetic; he paid well; and he apparently adored their country—was writing a book about it—so why should his rustic ramblings here, there and everywhere generate feelings other than of goodwill and welcome?

Then—presto—the War, and in the general hubbub nobody missed the young Swiss of Zurich from his accustomed paths and haunts. Rather—nobody did except the Grenoble modiste whose appearance in the Geneva café Schmoltz now awaited. Marguerite had missed her man profoundly—could not understand why he, a neutral, had become swallowed up in the tumult, had vanished in the last days of July without leaving a word behind him. For nearly a year she had been his—all his—her first big passion; had even brought sorrow to a little house perched in the old town above the swirling, brown Isère, by taking furnished rooms

over in the modern city so that she might be ever ready to receive her lover on his frequent returns from his mountain enthusiasms. Her wages in a smart dressmaker's, plus a little he insisted on adding, had amply met the change-over.

. . . Now, at last, long last—one month—his brief "Come to Geneva"!

In a very short while Marguerite had secured a day's holiday, a permit de voyage, and her return ticket.

After the first joy and thrill of renewed contact with her man, Marguerite, convinced that she would shortly be coming to Geneva to remain, wanted to see the whole town. It was too gorgeous being in a neutral city. "It appears there are spies everywhere here—do show me one!"

Her companion laughed. "I have not yet had time to meet them all but they say they dine side by side at the chief table d'hôtes."

"But why does Switzerland allow it? Geneva is France, after all!" came in full unreason from a daughter of Savoy.

"They, I mean *we*, are going to make a lot of money before things are over by leasing out our country as an espionage preserve to both sides." The prophet made a merry point of it, but actually he was re-reading the girl beside him. Was the War going to upset her usual

balance and tranquillity, chief reasons why he had cultivated her in the past? . . . apart, yes he must admit it, from that glorious mass of auburn-red hair (incidentally, this might now become a trifle too conspicuous).

Thus, "Wilhelm Bauer" wondered as he beheld this lithe, girlish form athrob with life, as he looked deeply again into intelligent eyes enframed by their customary arresting pallor. Would she still be the same reserved, self-possessed, self-reliant Marguerite—so outside the ordinary run of her age—he had known in Grenoble? Not ask questions, trust him, and do as she was told?

. . . In his rooms that night he was to have his answer.

Yes, assented a suspicious but hopelessly in love French girl who understood she could not come and live in Geneva yet awhile, but who clutched at the substitute offered: frequent visits thither. Yes, she would go back to Grenoble, meet the people he had told her of, and come over to Geneva whenever they gave her anything to bring to him.

Who were the people? Oh, just friends down from Paris. What would be the nature of the papers or packages they might transmit to her? Oh, purely matter connected with his new neutral prisoners of war job and which might otherwise not pass the stupid censors! explained her lover, who added sundry curious methods by

which Marguerite might conceal her budget in an emergency while en route.

The months and years passed—1914, 1915, the spring of 1916. Much water flowed beneath Jean Jacques Rousseau's bridges; Geneva grew to be one of the three principal spying-and-exchange marts of neutral lands. On camouflaged Captain Schmoltz's books alone appeared some five dozen names: important Parisian and zone-of-the-armies agents, carriers, counter-spies, reporters of trivialities, shadowers (quite a number of whom did little else than watch the other side in Geneva), all contributing to the aggregate of information forwarded on to Berlin.

Some had a fixed monthly retainer of a few hundred Swiss francs, plus limited expenses and the prospect of a bonus for exceptional work; others, particularly any women on the books, were paid exclusively by results and usually two or three months in arrears "to keep a hold over them"; other information, again, would be bought over the counter cash down.

It was all rather commonplace and unromantic save for one of the organisation, a faithful carrier across the frontier from Savoy who was working on a different basis to any of the others. Back and forth many times Marguerite journeyed between Grenoble and Geneva, mostly by rail but sometimes by road and ready

with a variety of explanations for fellow-passengers curious as to her frequent "déplacements": a love affair, dressmaking work in Geneva, travelling for a Lyons silk firm.

The reward was worth the risk, thought Marguerite.

It was getting a bit irksome having to pay this helper of the Fatherland in other than gold, thought Schmoltz, as other attractions offered in the city of Calvin. Still . . .

Curse it, though! her arrivals were really growing a bit too frequent, especially when she had nothing to bring. He would have to put his foot down on that at all events.

"Why do you take up my time and run a risk without reason?" he burst out in anger upon Marguerite's next empty-handed coming.

"I had to see you. It is three weeks since we met!"

"Three weeks! What is that? Go back to your parents and don't let me see you here again until you have something to bring!"

"But, darling, I came also to tell you that I am sure I am being watched. In the café at Grenoble, round Lucille's, at the station, I have noticed the same men. And when I passed the frontier to-day at Annemasse they searched me. Yes, stripped me almost naked—a big strong woman did it—and searched me everywhere . . . oh, but everywhere, tu comprends? It was dreadful!"

For a moment the German was inclined to burst out laughing, to inquire if his infallible methods would have stood the test. But a reaction of impatience got the ascendancy instead. Decidedly she was getting a nuisance, this child. Might even give others, more important, away. Nevertheless—better humour her.

“What a foolish little girl”—the tone changed to one of affectionate reproof—“to be frightened at nothing! Come, we shall have a merry evening, first to old father Guillaume’s for dinner then to the Café-Concert, then to . . . well, we shall see, little one, eh?”

In the course of the merry evening the German evolved his plan; and as a result, when Marguerite left Geneva next morning, it was with orders from her beloved and funds to get to Paris without delay and there await instructions (“we may be able to use her up there—at least it will be getting her away for the time being from here where she’s obviously become suspect,” was the determining reflection).

It was in the middle of 1916 that this happened, implying that for two long and desperate years this girl of Savoy had been acting as carrier for her German lover. For the first eighteen months she had aroused no suspicions, but from the early spring of 1916 onwards her frequent

journeyings to and from Geneva had excited attention. Yet the method with suspects in war is never to arrest them outright, but to shadow them so that those they meet surreptitiously may also be detected. Often a wearisome business. Moreover, damaging espionage that could otherwise be stopped, one may have to allow temporarily to continue. Yet the yield of patience could be great—as it was in the case of Marguerite. While this love-lorn fille de province was braving the streets of war-time Paris, all alone, and living in a modest hotel on the left bank, the final twitchings of the net were being effected round the enemy agents for whom she had so long acted as carrier. And her own passionate outpourings to Geneva were being steamed open by expert hands.

Before the Conseil de Guerre which met in Paris to try her in the early autumn of 1916, Marguerite took oath that she never knew her lover was a German, much less a spy, or that she had ever carried material to Geneva conscious that such was damaging to France. But the Court unanimously sentenced the accused to death. Perhaps those two solid years of love-making with a sale Boche in Geneva . . . this French girl sending poilus to their deaths, maybe by the thousand, in order to assuage her own passions . . . were too much for the Conseil de Guerre,

In the centuries-old and rotting women's prison of St. Lazare Marguerite quickly entered into the dominant spirit of the place: part prison, part hospital, but chiefly convent owing to all the wardresses being sisters of the Order of Marie-Joseph. The condemned modiste of Grenoble became intensely devout and when she was not praying she only asked that she should be aided into sleep and forgetfulness, a request which the doctor found it beyond him to accede to. Fortunately, however, the special spies' régime spared Marguerite from the appalling war-time promiscuity of many hundred diseased women of the streets, who formed three-quarters of the company.

Marguerite—who now wore her magnificent hair in two plaits reaching almost to the knees—occupied a “pistole” or little white cell, relatively well aired and lighted, and in which were located only two of the better-noted prisoners, there to watch her, and between whom she slept while an ever-passing sister looked in through the grille, or “judas,” on the trio. By day, Marguerite chiefly occupied herself in making paper flags for patriotic French flag days. She hardly ever spoke or read anything or ate more than a few spoonfuls of the soup and vegetables brought in by a sister twice daily. In her coarse black-and-blue striped dress, rough check neckerchief and black bonnet, Marguerite lived her last few weeks in a kind of haze.

Ce n'était pas possible!

But it was possible. On Sunday, January 9, 1917, the news sped from lip to lip in the prison that the first woman was to be shot in Paris during the War. "To-morrow morning. La belle Marguerite. She with the head of hair so lovely and the air so quiet."

The fifty sisters of St. Lazare prayed more fervently that night; and when, next morning, Marguerite was led into the chapel—waxed and as in a trance, her hands joined before her across a simple grey frock that displayed her slim but well-set-up young figure and her immense auburn plaits recalling another Marguerite—two score of the good souls were kneeling, heads bowed, and reciting ultimate prayers.

The Mass that followed was said in an ever-more hushed chapel. Kneeling at the back behind a white sea of sisters' bonnets, Marguerite looked into space, already far away. Near her were officers of the Republican Guard, who would presently attend at her execution. The little altar-boy stumbled over his responses.

It was like, they say, the solemn offering up of this girl amid a beauty and grandeur of human suffering but rarely attained. Nearly all, save Marguerite, were weeping at the "*Ite, Missa est.*"

A bitter January dawn of 1917—and you

remember that winter.

Vincennes.

Three closed cars with doctors, priests, sisters, warders, officers, draw up adjacent to a broad six-foot pole. But no one else is there. By a telephonic error the execution has been ordered for eight o'clock instead of seven-thirty. And not until eight o'clock will the execution squad arrive.

So for half an hour Marguerite must wait. She is cold, begins to shiver, and asks to be allowed to walk round the ground. For the balance of the time she does this, between Sister Léonide and the old Abbé Dommergue. Nor will it be necessary to offer her support, though others are at hand.

Will they never come?

"I have my revolver here," trembles an officer. "I have a good mind to go up and shoot her!"

But with military precision, as eight strikes, the troops march on to the ground: a half company which proceeds to form up on either side of the pole, and a firing party of five senior N.C.O.'s and as many trustworthy other ranks, standing ten paces from that post.

Marguerite's arms are roped behind her to the pole. She refuses to have her eyes bandaged.

"Say what you promised, my child!" exhorts the old Abbé.

W

“Pardon of God and of France . . . Vive la France!”

Marguerite half falls to the ground, hung up by one arm. Red pools steam on the frozen earth.

THE MAD ENDING

It was years and years later.

Chancing to meet on a cruise to the Norwegian Fjords, the two former Intelligence officers were wont to sit up late on deck exchanging memories of their branch. One had served in the East, the other in the West, so that the resurrected "shop" ran over a fairly wide field.

On one such night of northern lights, conversation fell to 1919 and to what it might have been like in "I," had the battle of brains been perpetuated against the Antwerp-Meuse line, the famous ultimate German rampart defending the Fatherland and which it was thought Ludendorff would never voluntarily give up.

"I think," assessed the Westerner, "that had stationary warfare recommenced, things would have got into a bit of a jam. We were getting too jolly clever with our stunting and hoodwinking. We'd have finished up by hoodwinking ourselves as well as the enemy. Ever hear of the carrier pigeons which couldn't find their loft again? I always think of it as a test case. The French had camouflaged the damn thing so much the poor things failed to recognise it!"

The Easterner chuckled and sipped his night-cap.

"Of course, though," he countered presently, "Out East we rather held to stunting and leg-pulling. But perhaps we had easier fry. In Mesopotamia we used to send out dud wireless which the Turk fairly swallowed. That was one reason Falkenhayn gave up his idea of retaking Baghdad and turned to Palestine instead. Kritchmeyer, the German chief of staff at Mosul, fell for our spoof transmission and very kindly 'identified' the presence of one entire division more than we actually possessed on the spot."

"Good enough," applauded the West, "but your meat might have been our poison. Take a parallel case of bluff—but one which didn't come off. You may have heard of special areas? Well, briefly, the idea was for contre-espionage officers to fasten on to the rear of an area where important operations were impending and to spread all kinds of circumstantial rumours there so as to mislead lurking enemy agents. 'Taisez vous—les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent'—you remember? Well, in front of Amiens in 1918 the rumours got so bally circumstantial that one rumour about an attack got mistaken for the real thing in the mess-up and a brigade acted on it. Pretty little affair! And there would have been more in the same line had we gone on."

A nod from the deck chair opposite. "Quite. I see your point. Possibly we were able to do things elsewhere which would have been a wash-

out on the crowded Western front. Of course you heard of Cavan's parting coup?"

"Vaguely. The masquerade? What actually happened? One hears such yarns."

"Happens I had a little to do with it arranging covering wireless camouflage. Our two divisions had been up on the Asiago all the summer, when it was decided to push them across first in the final Italiano biff on the Piave. But it was essential to keep our move down to the Piave very hush-hush, because the Austrians would have immediately twigged things. So, as we took over, we dressed each of our first-line battalions—which had to take Papadopoli Island—in Italiano tin hats and capes. Some even had feathers. The first over was the H.A.C., I believe. The Austrians must have thought they were seeing spooks when they heard sound English cursing coming from 'Italians' in the attack that followed. Anyway, they fairly hoofed it!"

"Splendid! Illustrates my point, though, of the trouble we were running into. Supposing we or the Boches had started putting on fancy dress in the West? Germans dressing up as Americans and coming right over unmolested and occupying an important position? Quite within the bounds of possibility as things were heading. It all comes back to what I have said—that our brain-boxes were getting too big, over and above the heads of the poor infantry. Our Intelligence

show, as I suppose you know, went through three distinct phases in the West—I don't know what it was like out East. A brigadier and six or seven subordinates went out to Mons solely to find out what the enemy was doing, chiefly via the good old cavalry scout, one or two of Colonel Trenchard's original air squadron, a solitary wireless intercepting station, and our agents in Belgium.

"They hardly got a prisoner to examine, nor a document. In fact, it wasn't until first Ypres that we settled down properly to this straight-forward phase number one. We were awfully keen, and I remember a good deal of our time was taken up with enquiries into whether Flemings were signalling over to Fritz with windmills, chimney puffs, drying laundry, and clock-hands! There were also heliograph, dog, and toy balloon scares. One general announced that the side which first managed to maintain immediate contact with its spies behind the other fellow's line would win the war. It was all very virginal.

"The second phase arrived during the ruddy awful Somme two years later. In addition to finding out what the enemy was doing, we began to take precautions to prevent Fritz finding out what *we* were doing.

"The third and final phase, grafted on to the above two, I suppose dated from the Cambrai tank break-through of November, 1917. Everybody began yapping about 'surprise' there-

abouts. After over three years of G.H.Q. doubting its feasibility, the thing could be done! However—and this is where “I” came in—a first essential had to be the hoodwinking of the enemy so that he should come to false conclusions. That was phase three of Intelligence, and the one that I think might eventually have led to things getting just about too mad. Think of it. Thousands of Intelligence officers all developing their own bright ideas as to what was happening—the paper war alone, under the Unified Command, was growing to such dimensions as to defeat analysis—and every branch of the Service doing its own camouflage and hoodwinking stunts. And the point is that if these stunts were not properly co-ordinated, far from misleading the enemy they helped him in his deductions.

“We had wireless trench sets sending fake stuff, officers carrying out false conversations in the front line so that they should be overheard, aeroplanes wirelessly down fake reports so that these should be intercepted, telegraphists sending fake morse messages. All fake. Then again, it was growing into a feature for ‘deserters’—well, to desert at crucial moments, according to plan, in order subsequently to mislead Boche examining officers with lies. V.C.’s and things for it. But almightily difficult to wangle and carry through. Incidentally, Fritz got up to the same trick before us—it was one

of the duties of the pick of Ludendorff's 'security officers.' Again, we thought we were damn clever substituting electric 'pigeons' for Alsatian and Polish eavesdroppers in prisoners' cages. We hid listening wires in the ground and listened to what the prisoners said as they passed them. Result: Germans got to know of it and arranged for the stouter types, when taken prisoner, to stroll about talking prepared stuff."

"How very confusing."

"It would have got much more so. You remember what we did in France with Dominion troops possessing distinctive accents? Moved parties of Aussies and Canadians here and there up and down the line so that their accents might be overheard on the German listening-sets and wrong identifications in line made of the Australian and Canadian Corps? Well, the Germans had accents, too, to play about with, and started doing the same with Bavarians and Saxons. Our retort was to have been to move American accents up to Ypres and God knows where else when the end came. The whole business was to make things emphatically not what they seemed. A good idea, but . . ."

"Who really set it rolling?"

"Ludendorff, on March 21. We had the notion just as early. Earlier. But G.H.Q.'s attitude used to be 'this is a war not a bally comic opera!' whenever anybody put up the idea. However, one thing Henry Wilson did

do was to alter that directly after he started functioning at Versailles. He became our Ludendorff in this matter at any rate . . . that is if all this doesn't bore you . . ."

"Go ahead!"

"Well, what he did was roughly this—at least so it was once explained to me. He had made for himself a detailed map of the *Allies'* line. Every Allied move, every important piece of construction work, every dump, every C.C.S., every Decauville, figured on that map, which changed from day to day as we made new roads here and new aerodromes there—in fact as we as good as wrote our battle intentions on the ground for enemy air observers to note. Then Wilson collected some Intelligence officers and lectured them something after this style:

" 'This map is henceforth your pidjin. You are to become German officers in mind. You will study minutely what the Allies do from day to day and you will warn me when they do things which give away their intentions, both tactical and strategical.

" 'The object to be aimed at, to bring about surprise, is for the whole Allied front to be rendered and maintained as normal and inter-resembling as possible. If we should build too much at one spot, preparatory to an attack, then we will do dummy construction somewhere else to balance it. The ultimate ideal to be attained is the double-cross. Say we intend attacking at

Ypres. We shall make no visible preparations there. Such as are made will be, say, at Cambrai. The enemy will say: "Ha! he is going to attack at Cambrai all the same! He wishes us to think in the North where all is quiet!" But in the upshot we *shall* attack at Ypres.'

"That was about Wilson's idea. The line to be normal everywhere except when it was being expressly distorted for bamboozling purposes.

"It was also rumoured towards the end that Foch, in co-operation with Wilson, was toying with the notion of creating a sort of travelling circus—pretty nearly a division of all arms—whose mission it was to have been to go around putting up the dust and intentionally getting observed by the Boche air scouts. One division, so they said, might have been pushed about the place so as to give the idea of a whole corps, if not of an army, being on the move. Wilson's conception just about got going. The rumoured travelling circus apparently wasn't quite ready at Armistice. My belief is that the pair of 'em—the double-cross and the circus—would have led to mix-ups. Apart from brother Boche falling to things and putting up an imitation."

The Eastener pondered this lengthy oration for a while.

Then, with some show of pride, he mentioned:

"We found it rather more plain sailing out East. Allenby went a good way towards winning his campaign by hoodwinking. You've

heard of the famous 'lost' haversack? Probably the best hoax . . ."

"I know. Got the Turk to move a division away from Beersheba by dropping faked documents under his nose, eh? Jolly good show! Still . . . we rather gave up faking documents after the corpse factory episode. Unless I am greatly mistaken, I know who worked on that alleged diary for several days. Fritz somewhat tardily began retaliating in 1918 by faking important staff documents and seeing that these got into Allied hands. I tell you, we shouldn't have known if we were on our heads or our heels had it run on into 1919, with one hundred per cent Black Jack Pershing clearing the arena at the head of his million-in-line, out to reap the harvest exclusively for God's Own Country! Thereby . . ."

"Hold on! Allenby also did his final breakthrough largely by leg-pulling. He plonked himself ostentatiously down in a Jerusalem hotel weeks beforehand and went through all the business as if he were going to attack at that end of the line—even to arranging a horse show to take place on September 19, right on the coast, so as to lull the Turk into believing that the coast sector was not to be involved. Of course, on September 20 he burst through there."

"Sorry, old top," laughed the West, "but our cavalry held horse shows all through, and as for hotels, the time we're talking of, Haig

and Foch were living in trains. That's what I wanted to tell you about when you shushed me. Foch was in a village called Sarceau and he didn't like the idea of trains. But his life became so valuable that he had to be practically guided towards one as soon as reports came through from agents in Belgium that there was a project on foot to make away with him—kidnap him, I believe."

"*Kidnap Foch?*"

"Mais oui. And not so wildly impossible either. Don't forget that by this time the landing of dynamiting parties by night—not merely of isolated spies—behind the Boche lines had become a common affair. Well, Fritz apparently decided to reply in kind, only a little more so—his show was getting so desperate. One Boche flight was to put a curtain of bombs round Sarceau while a second group of pilots were to have landed with machine-gunners with the mission of attacking the château while a rush was made for the slumbering Generalissimo; and so back high over the line with the prize. It may have been only a false alarm. All the same I fail to see why it should have been beyond the right sort of men, given luck and secrecy. One thing: it should be perfectly realisable in any next war unless special precautions are taken."

"I quite believe anything concerning the air. Incidentally, has it ever struck you who the worst spies of all were?"

"That's easy. Women."

"No rotting. I mean the most deadly?"

"Can't imagine. Wasn't my line."

"Fellows in the air services going traitor. Weren't many, but there were some. Easiest thing in the world for them to take note of everything happening and being said around them and then to fly away over the line on patrol and drop their reports with a smoke fuse attached to draw attention."

"It never happened?"

"Oh, yes it did. It happened at Salonika. And probably elsewhere. Think the Germans ever did the same—that some of their air fellows were in our pay?"

"Never heard of it. But I do know they didn't do half so much spy-dropping in our lines as we and the French did chez eux. You see, the Germans didn't know the countryside behind our lines well enough to go wandering about it in safety once they'd landed, and they had no friends there to take them in. The French had a specially-trained squad of former frontier douaniers permanently ear-marked for dropping purposes. Much the best. Knew every inch of the occupied territory and were of course personae grata with the local inhabitants."

"By Jove! Never thought of douaniers. The very lads—of course!"

The Easterner for a while puffed at his pipe in rumination. Then: "I suppose the French

must have been fearfully hot stuff in Intelligence all the way through?"

"Nothing of the kind" (the late B.E.F. assumed a certain hauteur). "On the contrary, despite their sharpness their show was pretty putrid a good deal of the time. Judgment faulty. Unable to read right down into the meaning of things—or, if you like, jibbed at taking the risk. Doesn't much matter which you call it. Good heavens, man, a Boche deserter came over to them up near Ypres a week before the first gas attack and told them everything that was going to happen . . . even had a gas mask on him, first ever seen. And the French did nothing about it! Thought it was all lies. Same kind of thing, moreover, was still occurring right towards the end. Remember when Ludendorff fairly swamped the Chemin des Dames by surprise—including three of our unfortunate divisions sent there for quiet? Well, we sent our chers Alliés a postcard taken off a Boche at La Bassée some days before, which fairly hinted at that attack. But, again, no notice was taken. Let's keep off criticism, though. Lord, we were no prize exhibits ourselves! The point is that it was going to be a fine muck-up had things gone on, and no mistake. Whom the gods would destroy they first make too damn intelligent. Everything could be neutralised—countered by the other side—that was the deuce of it. The whirl merely got madder. Take Northcliffe's

air propaganda. Towards the finish we had to start preparing anti-Bolshevik lectures for the troops, perfectly convinced that Ludendorff would have retaliated by deluging our fellows with Lenin dope. The French, bless 'em, were just thereabouts more taken up with the possibility of 'German hearts' beating among the two million Doughboys in their midst. They were quite sure that some of these would come over as German agents and start blowing up bridges and viaducts and munition factories in the zone of the armies and on the L. of C. You see, no one dared to say a syllable to a Sammie—he could wander where he wanted to."

"Perhaps things *were* getting a trifle out of hand," conceded the East. "Ever hear of the Italian seaplanes that used to land on the inland waterways behind the Austrians and distribute arms to hiding remnants from Caporetto? When the end came these lads made themselves fairly felt. The Austrians thought they'd been taken in rear."

"And I'll cap that," announced the West, rising and stretching in the bright midnight. "Did you know that rotten fish played a prominent part in late 'eighteen?"

An amused shake of the head.

"Well, it did. Tied to the boot-soles of spies dropped behind the Boche lines. It put pursuing German police dogs off the scent. But I'm thinking it's time to turn in."

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